

The experiences of restorative justice practices for those attending an alternative provision: a thematic analysis.

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Abstract

Restorative practices can be traced back to the Maori communities in New Zealand and have their historical and cultural origins in those communities. Restorative practices were then applied in the criminal justice sector throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and a decade later in the education sector. The argued benefit of restorative practice in schools is that it can help to shift the focus from 'zero-tolerance' approaches to less punitive approaches, providing young people with the opportunity to learn and develop skills when conflict occurs.

Current research in the UK tends to focus on the evaluation of restorative practices, with a focus on its effect on reducing exclusions and other sanctions. There is good evidence that restorative practices are successful in reducing exclusions and that it is a good alternative to the 'zero-tolerance' behaviour policies in mainstream schools. However, there is a distinct lack of research being carried out in specialist settings such as pupil referral units and alternative provisions. Additionally, much of the qualitative research has focussed more on the adult's perceptions and does not give a lot of detail on young people's experiences of restorative practices.

I conducted my research in an alternative provision with six young people who had experienced at least one restorative meeting. I gathered the young people's views through semi-structured interviews and analysed the transcripts using thematic analysis. Three major themes were identified, with several subthemes. Theme one highlighted that the young people had knowledge of restorative meetings, but that their understanding of the purpose of these meetings deviated from the underpinnings of restorative practices. Similarly, theme two showed that the young people were broadly critical of the process and spoke about areas such

as equality, feelings of disempowerment and the application of restorative practice. Theme three demonstrated they had both positive and negative reflections on their previous education setting.

These themes raise questions on how restorative practice is being used in this setting and how the young people have interpreted and responded to its use. The findings suggest that, at least in this setting, young people's experience of restorative practice is not always being applied in a way that aligns with its underlying principles. The potential implications of this misalignment are discussed and suggestions for evidence-based practice are outlined.



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Table of contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	IX
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER	1
1.2 RESTORATIVE PRACTICE.....	1
1.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICE	4
1.3.1 <i>Criminal Justice System</i>	5
1.3.2 <i>Education Sector</i>	7
1.3.2.1 Alternative provisions, restorative practice and language needs	8
1.4 NATIONAL CONTEXT	10
1.5 LOCAL CONTEXT.....	12
1.6 PERSONAL INTEREST IN RESTORATIVE PRACTICE	13
1.7 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTION.....	15
1.8 OVERVIEW OF EACH CHAPTER	15
1.8.1 <i>Chapter 2: Literature Review</i>	15
1.8.2 <i>Chapter 3: Methodology</i>	15
1.8.3 <i>Chapter 4: Findings</i>	16
1.8.4 <i>Chapter 5: Discussion</i>	16
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER.....	17
2.2 LITERATURE SEARCH	17
2.2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>Review Question and Database Search</i>	18
2.2.2.1 Review Purpose.....	18
2.2.2.2 Search Strategy	19
2.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE	26
2.3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	26
2.3.2 <i>Efficacy of Restorative Practice</i>	26
2.3.2.1 Quantitative Outcomes	26
2.3.2.1.1 Summary of Quantitative Research.....	33
2.3.2.2 Qualitative Outcomes	33
2.3.2.2.1 School Informed Outcomes and Perspectives.....	34
2.3.2.2.2 Parent Informed Outcomes and Perspectives.....	47
2.3.2.2.3 Children and Young People Outcomes and Perspectives	48
2.3.2.2.4 Summary of Qualitative Research	55
2.4 RATIONALE FOR CURRENT RESEARCH	55
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	58
3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER	58
3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL POSITION	58
3.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTION	60
3.4 DESIGN	61
3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE	62
3.5.1 <i>Participants</i>	63
3.5.2 <i>Recruitment</i>	63
3.5.3 <i>Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs)</i>	64

3.5.4 Recording.....	65
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS	65
3.6.1 Thematic Analysis.....	65
3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.....	69
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	74
3.8.1 Age of Participants and Consent	74
3.8.2 Risk of Harm	75
3.8.3 Debriefing	75
3.8.4 Right to Withdraw	76
3.8.5 Confidentiality	76
3.9 REFLEXIVITY	76
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS	79
4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER.....	79
4.2 THEMES	79
4.3 THEME 1: KNOWLEDGE OF RESTORATIVE MEETINGS.....	80
4.3.1 Process Knowledge	81
4.3.2 Views on the Purpose	84
4.4 THEME 2: RESTORATIVE MEETINGS BROADLY CRITICISED	88
4.4.1 Disempowering Factors	89
4.4.2 Fairness.....	96
4.4.3 When the Restorative Meetings Happen.....	99
4.4.4 Role of The Parent/Carer	105
4.4.5 Some Positive Views	109
4.5 THEME 3: CONFLICTING VIEWS ON ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS	111
4.5.1 Negative views on previous setting's behaviour policy	112
4.5.2 Positive Views on Previous Setting	113
4.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	115
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION	118
5.1 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER	118
5.2 THEME ONE: KNOWLEDGE OF RESTORATIVE MEETINGS	118
5.3 THEME TWO: RESTORATIVE MEETINGS BROADLY CRITICISED.....	121
5.3.1 Disempowering Factors	121
5.3.2 Fairness.....	125
5.3.3 When Restorative Meetings Happen.....	126
5.3.4 Role of Parent/Carer.....	128
5.3.5 Some Positive Views	128
5.4 THEME THREE: CONFLICTING VIEWS ON ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS.....	129
5.4.1 Interventions.....	129
5.5 LINKS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH.....	131
5.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	133
5.6.1 Recruitment and Participants.....	133
5.6.2 Interviews	135
5.6.3 Evaluation of Thematic Analysis.....	137
5.6.4 Reflexivity	139
5.7 IMPLICATIONS	140
5.7.1 Implications Within Research Setting and Wider Practice	141
5.7.2 Implications for Future Research.....	143
5.7.3 Implications for Educational Psychology Practice	144
5.8 REFLECTIONS.....	145
5.9 CONCLUSIONS	148
REFERENCES	150
APPENDICES	163

APPENDIX 1: OPT-OUT LETTER FROM THE PROVISION (ANONYMISED)	163
APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO PARENTS WITH RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION AND OPT-OUT FORM	164
APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	166
APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.....	167
APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE	168
APPENDIX 6: UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPROVAL	169
APPENDIX 7: BOROUGH ETHICAL APPROVAL	170
APPENDIX 8: EXTRACT FROM ADNAN’S INTERVIEW.....	171
APPENDIX 9: PSEUDONYMS ASSIGNED TO PARTICIPANTS.....	175
APPENDIX 10: EXAMPLES OF THE CODING PROCESS	176
APPENDIX 11: TABLE OF THEMES, CODES AND QUOTES	178
APPENDIX 12: INITIAL CODES/THEMES	204
APPENDIX 13: BUILDING THE THEMES.....	206

List of Figures

Figure 1.2.1 The Social Discipline Window.	3
Figure 2.2.1 Systematic Review Process Flow Chart.	22
Figure 4.2.1 Thematic Map.	80
Figure 4.3.1 Theme 1: Knowledge of Restorative Meetings.	81
Figure 4.4.1 Theme 2: Restorative Meetings Broadly Criticised.	89
Figure 4.5.1 Theme 3: Conflicting Views on Alternative Behaviour Interventions.	112
Figure 5.3.1 Ladder of Young People's Participation.	125

List of Tables

Table 2.2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.	20
Table 2.2.2 Papers Included in the Literature Review.	23
Table 3.3.6.1: Phases of Thematic Analysis.	69
Table 3.7.1 Trustworthiness of the Current Research.	71

Chapter 1 | Introduction

1.1 Overview of Chapter

In this chapter I will offer a definition of restorative practice and outline its underlying principles. I will then outline the development and history of restorative practices through the criminal justice system, and how they have evolved so that they can be applied in the education sector. Following this, I will present the national and local context that this research has been conducted in and discuss my personal reasons for choosing this area of research. Finally, I will provide an overview of the structure and content of this thesis.

1.2 Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is a philosophy and approach that comes from the processes of restorative justice. It was designed as an approach to wrongdoing that focuses on repairing the harm done in conflicts and problem-solving how the repair may be achieved. Its focus is on repairing the relationships involved in the conflict. This contrasts with the more traditional and retributive approach that focuses on punishing those responsible.

In order for practice to be considered restorative it must have three basic considerations. Zehr (2015) identified these three pillars of restorative practice as harm, obligations and engagement or participation:

- *Harm*: this is a focus on victims and what their needs are after an incident. There is an acceptance that harm has been done to people and their relationships. The nature of and how this harm can be repaired has to be

established. The view of harm is not limited to the victims, however, there is also focus on the wrongdoer, supporters of the victims, and other community members.

- *Obligations*: this is a focus on responsibility and accountability of those involved in the conflict. The person responsible is helped to understand the impact of their actions on others and is encouraged to take responsibility for the harm and repair the harm done. Like the previous pillar, these obligations are not only for the wrongdoer, but also shared by the wider community, who too must also take responsibility for what has contributed to the incident. It is the community's responsibility to make changes that reduce the risk of further harm. They have an obligation to support those that need it, including the wrongdoers, victims, and their family.
- *Engagement or participation*: the individuals involved in the incident must be involved in the problem-solving. There must be engagement and participation from the key individuals in the telling of their version of events, exploring the harm and how best to repair it, and resolving any issues related to the cause. This contrasts with more traditional procedures in which those in authority often simply 'dispense' justice and tell those involved what will happen to the wrongdoer. It is argued that this means there is little opportunity for those key individuals affected by an incident to engage in the problem-solving process or to have a voice.

In restorative practice approaches wrongdoers can still be punished, but this is within the context of focussing on relationships. The wrongdoer should be reintegrated back in to the community, for the good of the wrongdoer and the community as a whole. This relational approach can only be affective when a fair

process is observed. Glasser (1969) referred to the 'social discipline window', (see figure 1.2.1) to demonstrate how important it is to involve individuals in decisions that affect them. It shows the importance of working with these individuals rather than doing things to or for them.

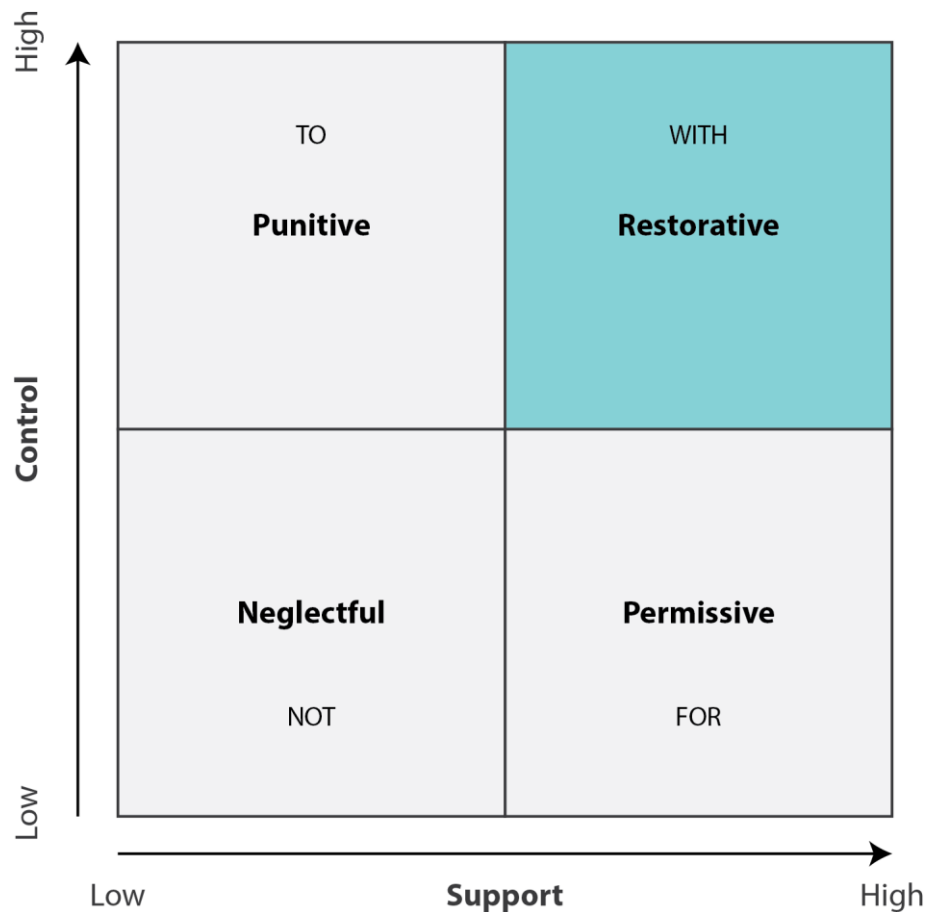


Figure 1.2.1 The Social Discipline Window.

The vertical axis refers to the use of authority, with high control referring to authoritarian/punitive responses. The horizontal axis refers to support, showing high support without control to be neglectful or permissive. Restorative practice is included in those which maintain high standards and boundaries at the same time as being supportive. Adapted from The Social Discipline Window (Glasser, 1969).

In the following section I will demonstrate how restorative practice has been developed and describe the different ways in which it is applied in education settings.

1.3 The Development of Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is not a new concept. In fact, it has been referred to as the most ancient and prevalent approach to resolving conflict in history (Liebmann, 2007). In traditional communities, it emerged from the recognition that whilst simply punishing an offender or wrongdoer could be seen as emotionally satisfying for the victim, it actually does little to help victims heal and it does not contribute to repairing harm within the community. More recent attempts to provide a victim-centred approach to justice has drawn on the customs of aboriginal, Māori and First Nations people and has been modified for the 21st Century (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003).

The First Nation conceptualisation of justice is founded on the restoration of harmony, rather than seeking to blame and punish those involved in causing the harm (Sia, 2013). The principle aim in this conception of justice is to meet the needs of the victim and restore their well-being. There is also a focus on reintegrating the wrongdoer back in to the community rather than simply applying punitive sanctions. Māori traditions refer to the concept of Mana, the idea that the agency and prestige of an individual is what needs to be restored following harm (Carruthers, 2013). These principles informed the foundations of restorative justice.

In his 1990 seminal book, *Changing Lenses*, Zehr described the first recorded, formalised victim-offender mediation which occurred in Canada in 1974. A

probation officer took two young men to 22 homes they had vandalised to meet with the homeowners. This led to the development of their offender reconciliation programs. Zehr is considered a pioneer of restorative justice and his books have been highly influential in the development of restorative practices worldwide.

Nils Christie, a Norwegian criminologist, is also considered to be highly influential in the field of restorative practice. His 1977 paper, *Conflicts as Property*, described conflicts as being the 'property' of those involved in those conflicts. He went on to describe that the 'property' is then 'stolen' by other professionals such as lawyers, teachers and social workers. He goes on to state that conflicts should be given back to the participants who were involved, and that help should be provided to them so that they can be solved within the context of the community. He described this as being in direct contrast to the retributive justice paradigm.

1.3.1 Criminal Justice System

Victim offender mediation in the UK grew in popularity from the 1980s onwards, eventually leading to the restorative justice consortium in 1997. This brought together several national organisations, creating a rise in the use of restorative approaches in the justice system. When New Labour were elected there was further growth, with a focus on victim-centred justice system, particularly in youth offending (Rock, 2004).

In 1994, Thames Valley Police, in response to a surge in theft, set up the Milton Keynes Retail Theft Initiative (Hoyle, 2007). This brought together young shoplifters and the store managers so that they discuss the harm caused and how they could repair the harm and to attempt to reduce reoffending. Following this, the police force accessed training in restorative justice so that they could run conferences and meetings. Between 1998 and 2001 over 2000 restorative

conferences took place. There were also 12000 conferences that were conducted without the victim and their views were presented to the offender.

The Campbell Collaboration conducted a meta-analysis of 10 randomised trials on restorative justice, comprised of seven UK studies, two Australian and one in the US. Strang et al (2013) found that in comparison to standard criminal justice processing restorative justice causes a modest reduction in subsequent reoffending. They also found that although this may be a modest reduction, the reduction is highly cost-effective and in the UK results in eight times less being spent on restorative justice conferences when compared to the cost of crimes committed.

The Ministry of Justice, New Zealand (Ministry of Justice, 2011) also explored the use of restorative justice, focussing on its effect on the reoffending rates of the offenders involved and the satisfaction of the victims in the process. Their surveys found that victims who participated in restorative justice found it a satisfying experience and felt better afterwards. They also said that they would recommend the process to other victims in the system. The Campbell review also found that being involved in restorative justice with offenders also reduced their desire to seek revenge.

Following the success in the criminal justice sector with adult offenders, the Crime and Disorder Act (Ministry of Justice UK, 1998) set up Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in every area of England and Wales. It was suggested that every area had restorative justice provisions in place.. In 2009 the National Standards for Youth Justice conducted an inspection of these provisions. Afterwards they stipulated that it was required that “YOTs have processes in place to ensure that victims of youth crime are involved, as appropriate, in a range of restorative processes that seek to put right the harm that they have experienced.” This was

followed up with two expectations that required Youth Offending Team managers to “Maximise victim involvement ...” and to include “the integration of restorative justice processes across all YOT interventions.” The inspection found that most of the victims spoke positively about their experience of restorative justice. Three quarters were happy with experience, and most said it was effective in achieving reparation for the harm done. All but one of the victims suggested they would recommend the restorative justice process to other victims. They also gathered the views of the offenders and these were also described as encouraging. Over three-quarters recognised that they had heard what the victim thought about the impact of the offence and had listened to this. All the offenders involved thought that the restorative process had been conducted fairly, even though most of them found it to be a difficult experience. Three-quarters of the young people said that their experience of restorative justice had changed their perspective on their own offending behaviour.

1.3.2 Education Sector

One of the first recorded uses of restorative approaches in schools was conducted by Margaret Thorseborn, then a school guidance counsellor and now a leading restorative approaches practitioner. She facilitated a conference, under the advice from police, for the victim of an assault in a school that involved several wrongdoers (O’Connell, 1998). This paved the way for the use of restorative approaches in schools.

Corrigan (2012) described restorative approaches in school as “a philosophy, in action, that places the relationship at the heart of the educational experience.” This contrasts with schools’ traditional focus on the wrongdoer and their tendency to pay little attention to the individual who has been harmed. Whereas a traditional justice approach taken by a school might involve framing the wrongdoer as ‘bad’

and not deserving of understanding or support, working restoratively creates greater possibilities for schools to attend to the needs of all individuals involved. Restorative practices were introduced to educational settings through the implementation of pilot programmes (Skinns, Rose, Hough, & London, 2009). Scotland led the way in introducing restorative practice into their schools and measured its impact across three local authorities, showing positive results (Kane et al., 2009).

Restorative practice in schools can be applied in several ways. This ranges from 'restorative chats' in the classroom, corridor or playground for low-level incidents of harm to restorative meetings and restorative conferences. These are a more formal meeting between the wrongdoer, the harmed and any other relevant stakeholders and follow a structure.

1.3.2.1 Alternative provisions, restorative practice and language needs

In order for restorative justice to work, all parties involved are required to have a level of understanding of the concepts being discussed during the intervention (Zehr, 2015). Yet, it is well established that many young people who have social and emotional needs and associated behaviour needs also have language and communication needs (Snow & Powell, 2011). Language and communication needs describe the range of needs related to all aspects of communication. The ability to communicate through language includes being able to understand others, form sounds, words and sentences and express ideas and emotions and use social language (Code of Practice, Department for Education, 2015). There is a clear relationship between language and communication needs and behaviour issues (Brownlie et al., 2004; Clegg, Hollis, Mawhood, & Rutter, 2005;

Lindsay, Dockrell, & Strand, 2007). For example, Lindsay et al (2007) found that those with identified speech and language needs showed high rates of social and behavioural problems and future offending behaviour later in life. There is evidence of undiagnosed language needs in young people with behavioural issues or diagnosed behaviour disorders and evidence that these language difficulties have contributed to the development of a behaviour disorder (Cross, 2004; Stringer & Clegg, 2006). Ripley and Yuill (2005) assessed the receptive and expressive language abilities of boys who had been permanently excluded from school. They found that skills in expressive language were most impaired and that these were closely linked to emotional well-being symptoms. Given the link between language needs and behaviour issues in educational settings, it is unsurprising that there is increasing evidence that young people in the youth justice system are highly likely to have undiagnosed language needs (Bryan, Freer, & Furlong, 2007; LaVigne & Van Rybroek, 2013, 2011; Purvis, McNeill, & Sutherland, 2014; P. C. Snow & Powell, 2011).

Snow and Powell (2008) found that over 50% of male young offenders in an Australian sample scored significantly lower than a control sample in measures of abstract language and narrative language. If these young people have poor narrative language skills and low expressive vocabulary they could present with non-specific, poorly structured and monosyllabic responses accompanied by poor non-verbal skills. A consequence of this may be that during restorative meetings they are seen as lacking remorse, being rude and having poor motivation to engage (P. C. Snow & Sanger, 2015).

A critique of the application of restorative justice in alternative provisions is that the young people who attend alternative provisions are more likely to have communication and language needs. Restorative practice requires participants

to affectively engage in conversations that focus on their own wrongdoing. It also involves them being able to show remorse and discuss ways in which to repair harm (Zehr, 2015). This means it relies heavily on the language abilities of all involved. Wrong-doers are expected to listen and respond to rather complex and often emotionally charged accounts from the victim's perspective. They are then required to express their own ideas in a narrative that is received as being adequate by the victim (Hayes & Snow, 2013). It is worth considering that not only do they have to process a lot of complex language, but they also have to do this under the context of elevated stress levels. Stressful situations in themselves can cause difficulties in successful communication (Maruna & Mann, 2006).

Some estimates show that at least one in two young offenders have deficits in their language skills (Snow, 2011). Restorative justice is emerging as a favoured intervention in alternative provisions, despite its high language demand and our knowledge that many individuals in these provisions will have undiagnosed language needs. Some researchers have gone as far to say that restorative justice conversations could be considered as high-risk for the wrong-doers if they have language difficulties (P. Snow, 2013), and that by using this intervention practitioners are setting them up to fail.

1.4 National Context

The rationale for using restorative practices in the education system seems clear. The exclusion rate in the UK is ten times higher than any other country in Europe and is on the rise, as the following statistics from the Department for Education indicate (Department for Education, 2018). The number of permanent exclusions across all primary, secondary and special schools (state-funded) increased from 4,950 in 2013/14 to 7,720 in 2016/17. The number of fixed period exclusions in

primary, secondary and special schools (state-funded) increased from 269,480 in 2013/14 to 381,865 in 2016/17. There is a public interest in the effect of school discipline choices recently, given the rise in youth crime, especially knife crime (B. Shaw, BBC News, 2019).

A less punitive approach to behaviour in schools may be required to work with young people, to educate them about the harm their behaviour causes, and give them a space to talk about their own feelings and thoughts. There has also been a recent interest in the role of alternative provisions and pupil referral units and how exclusions and attendance at these settings may lead to, or contribute to, criminal behaviour or involvement with gangs (Sodha, The Guardian, 2019). Using an alternative to punitive behaviour policy, such as restorative practice, could help to reduce problematic behaviours and attitudes.

There has been an attempt to shift approaches in education settings from more retributive justice approaches (assigning blame and punishment) to conflict resolution and negotiation approaches (Wearmouth, Mckinney, & Glynn, 2007). For example, the Back on Track Project (London Councils, 2012) in London ran pilot schemes to encourage pupil referral units to use restorative approaches.

One of the most influential principles in the recent Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2014) is that Educational Psychologists must listen to the views of the child or young person and advocate for their views in their work. The child or young person must be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in decisions about their future and should be at the centre of any intervention. My research will follow this principle by focussing on listening to the experiences of a marginalised group of young people, with the hope to gain insight into how restorative justice conferences are perceived and experienced.

1.5 Local Context

The research was conducted in an alternative provision in an inner London borough. The use of restorative meetings is part of the provision's behaviour policy. There is a high level of violent crime within the borough, and youth crime is of particular concern. Often the young people who have been excluded and attend the alternative provision have been involved in, or know of others involved in, crime in the area. Also, given the national context of youth knife crime and the debates regarding exclusion, the borough is looking for strategies that may help to reduce young people's engagement in crime in its own geographical area. It is clear that there is a need to tackle the multi-faceted reasons for youth crime and the rise in children and young people being excluded from school.

The borough's Social Services department has recently released plans to implement a restorative practice model across their workforce, so there is certainly a growing interest in restorative approaches. The alternative provision where this research took place is also being used as a good example of the application of restorative practice nationwide. The deputy headteacher recently spoke to a committee at the House of Commons on this topic.

Within the borough's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) there is an increasing interest in restorative practice with recent training being delivered to the whole team. The EPS, along with school staff from the borough, also has a restorative practice interest group. In this interest group we discuss examples of its use in the borough's schools and best practice, challenges facing schools and how educational psychologists may be able to facilitate practice in the borough. There is a clear interest in restorative practice in the borough in which I am on

placement, and this has formed part of my personal motivation to do research in the area of restorative practice.

1.6 Personal Interest in Restorative Practice

I have had an interest in school behaviour policies since I worked as a teaching assistant in a secondary school that used a highly punitive, zero policy approach to challenging behaviour. I found that the approach did not have the desired effect on behaviour, and that instead of dealing with the root causes of behaviour, the school would often exclude students to resolve problems. Whilst at the school, I worked closely with a 16-year-old boy who was engaging in offending behaviour out of school, whilst also presenting with challenging behaviour at school. He was eventually excluded. Not long after, he was then arrested and became engaged with a youth offending team. I wondered if this may have been avoided if he had been given the opportunity to learn from his experiences. I had been able to gain his trust and connect with him in the past, by waiting until he was ready to talk, and then having a conversation with him about his actions and how he felt.

Since that experience I have since developed my understanding of the causes and numbers of exclusions that happen in the UK. I have also developed an understanding of the way in which a punitive system can affect young people's social and emotional development. Young people who are in the youth justice system are very likely to have been previously permanently excluded from school and placed in alternative provisions (Arcia, 2006). Challen & Walton (2004) found that 80% of young people involved in the criminal justice system had previously been excluded from school in the UK. Skiba (2014) referred to this pattern as the 'school to prison pipeline,' where young people who are excluded from school are more likely to be involved in the youth offending system, and then later are more

likely to be in the adult prison population. I believe that part of the role of those that work with children and young people should be to teach them the skills to avoid progressing through this so-called 'pipeline'. Whilst studying for the doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology I researched alternative approaches to 'zero-tolerance' policies and I found that restorative approaches were increasingly being used, especially in alternative provisions (Crawford & Newburn, 2013).

I further developed my interest at my placement, where there is an awareness in promoting restorative approaches in schools. Whilst on placement I have had the opportunity to attend a conference on restorative practices, whole- team training and the EPS restorative practice interest group. Having attended these events and groups I learnt that there is a role for educational psychologists to enhance the use of restorative practice in educational settings. I also found that the young people involved in restorative meetings were seldom asked about their views on the process, in sharp contradiction of what educational psychologists should be striving to do. I think that the way in which young people experience interventions and how they remember these experiences is of paramount importance. If they have negative experiences, or reflect negatively, they may not learn from them and may become disengaged in the processes. Educational psychologists and other professionals should take these into account when planning behaviour policies and interventions so that they are meaningful for the young people involved. Therefore, I wanted to focus my study on the experiences of the young people involved and explore what could be learnt from their reflections on the process.

1.7 Purpose of Research and Research Question

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of young people who had participated in restorative justice meetings. I was interested in their thoughts and opinions about the process, whether it worked and what they might change about it. The specific research question I set out to explore in this research is:

What can we learn from young people's views about being involved in restorative justice meetings?

1.8 Overview of Each Chapter

I have presented my research study across Chapters 2 – 5. These chapters are outlined below.

1.8.1 Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I outline how I conducted my literature search and my inclusion and exclusion criteria. I then critically explore and evaluate the evidence base for research that measured efficacy and research that gathered the views of those involved in restorative practice.

1.8.2 Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I consider my own epistemological and ontological position and how this influenced my choice of research methodology and analysis. I consider the different aspects of this study's design and describe how I conducted the thematic analysis. I then describe the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations I made when designing this research.

1.8.3 Chapter 4: Findings

I used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected and, in this chapter, I present the themes and subthemes that I identified from the data. I present each theme in detail and provide excerpts from the original transcripts.

1.8.4 Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I discuss my findings in relation to existing psychological theory and make links to the literature presented in Chapter 2. I then evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research in relation to the methodology and consider implications for research and practice. I finish this chapter by summarising the overall findings of the research.

Chapter 2 | Literature Review

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

The previous chapter provided background information regarding this study, including how restorative practice has developed through history and its increased use in educational settings. I outlined the local and national context and discussed the government strategies which have led to a potential need for alternatives to a zero-policy approach to discipline and behaviour management in educational settings. I also shared my personal reasons for why I chose this area as a research topic and reflected on my reasons.

In this chapter I will provide a review and critical appraisal of the existing literature on restorative practices in educational settings. This will offer background and context to the current research and outline evidence relevant to my research question. I will outline the methodology for my systematic literature search, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria I used to identify relevant research, and provide details of key findings from the research papers meeting my criteria. I will analyse the research in terms quantitative and qualitative outcomes, also the perspectives of stakeholders. Finally, I will outline my rationale for the current study.

2.2 Literature Search

2.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of a systematic literature review is to find and bring together a large amount of information and analyse the findings of all the relevant literature the

findings. One potential benefit of literature review is to gain further understanding about the efficacy of an intervention (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). In order to be a systematic literature review, the evidence that is collated must meet certain criteria and the search criteria must focus on the specific review question (Higgins & Green, 2008). Other key characteristics of a systematic review are “an explicit, reproducible methodology, an assessment of the validity of the findings of the included studies, for example through the assessment of risk of bias; and a systematic presentation, and synthesis, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies” (Higgins & Green, 2008 p. 6).

2.2.2 Review Question and Database Search

In this section, I will outline my systematic literature search and the inclusion and exclusion criteria that I used to identify research that would answer my review question. I will then outline their key findings in relation to the efficacy of restorative practices, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative measures, and outline findings on the perceptions of restorative practices from different stakeholders. I will also critically appraise the research I have identified.

2.2.2.1 Review Purpose

As outlined previously in Chapter 1, most research in the area of restorative practice has been conducted within a community, prison, or youth offending population. Over the last two decades, however, there has been an increase in research in educational settings. Much of this research has been on how to implement the practice in schools and on how to relate findings from other settings in terms of educational settings.

The purpose of this literature review is to identify research that is relevant to, and informs, my primary research question:

What can we learn from young people's views about being involved in restorative justice meetings?

I therefore focussed on summarising research on restorative practices within an educational setting, concentrating specifically on studies that gathered the opinions of stakeholders in the process (including the CYP, parents/carers and school staff) as well as those that measured the efficacy of the approach.

2.2.2.2 Search Strategy

Broadly, the search strategy was broken down into three stages: identification, screening, and inclusion (see Figure 2.2.1). In the identification stage, I identified relevant databases and search terms relating to my research question. I used the following seven databases through EBSCO to perform the initial systematic literature review:

- Academic Search Complete
- PsychINFO
- Education Research Complete
- ERIC
- Child Development and Adolescent Studies
- British Education Index
- PsycARTICLES

Following this, I did a secondary search on the following databases to ensure I had not missed any major research:

- Google Scholar
- Scopus

I then selected key words from my research purpose and question and generated alternative words with the same meaning using the EBSCO thesaurus option.

This resulted in the following search terms:

“restorative practice” OR “restorative approaches” OR “restorative justice” AND “schools” OR “education”

After performing the initial search, I obtained a set of 1732 articles including duplicates. I then filtered out non-primary research from this set to 286 candidate research articles. I then proceeded to a screening stage, examining each article and filtering out articles according to a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2.2.1) that were designed to ensure I retained only those articles relevant for my research question. This left me with 13 articles remaining.

Table 2.2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer reviewed research	Periodicals, news articles, dissertations, reviews, commentaries and opinion papers
UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada	Research conducted in prisons, police force, communities, youth offending
Articles written in the English language	Research in colleges/universities
Research that involves a qualitative or quantitative measure or description of efficacy	Research or papers that are only descriptive in nature (e.g. a ‘How To’)
Primary research in education settings	

Finally, following the systematic search, I then proceeded to an inclusion stage. Here, 3 further articles were identified through inspection of the references of the 16 articles already identified. These additional articles were subject to the same inclusion and exclusion criteria as all others (Table 2.2.1).

After this process a total of 16 research papers were chosen for in depth critical analysis. A flow chart of all the numbers of articles included and excluded at each stage is depicted in Figure 2.2.1. The final research papers selected are detailed

in Table 2.2.2, where I have detailed their authors, title, and year, the country in which the research was undertaken, the research design used, and a description of the participants used in the study (where appropriate). In the next section, I critically review these papers in detail.

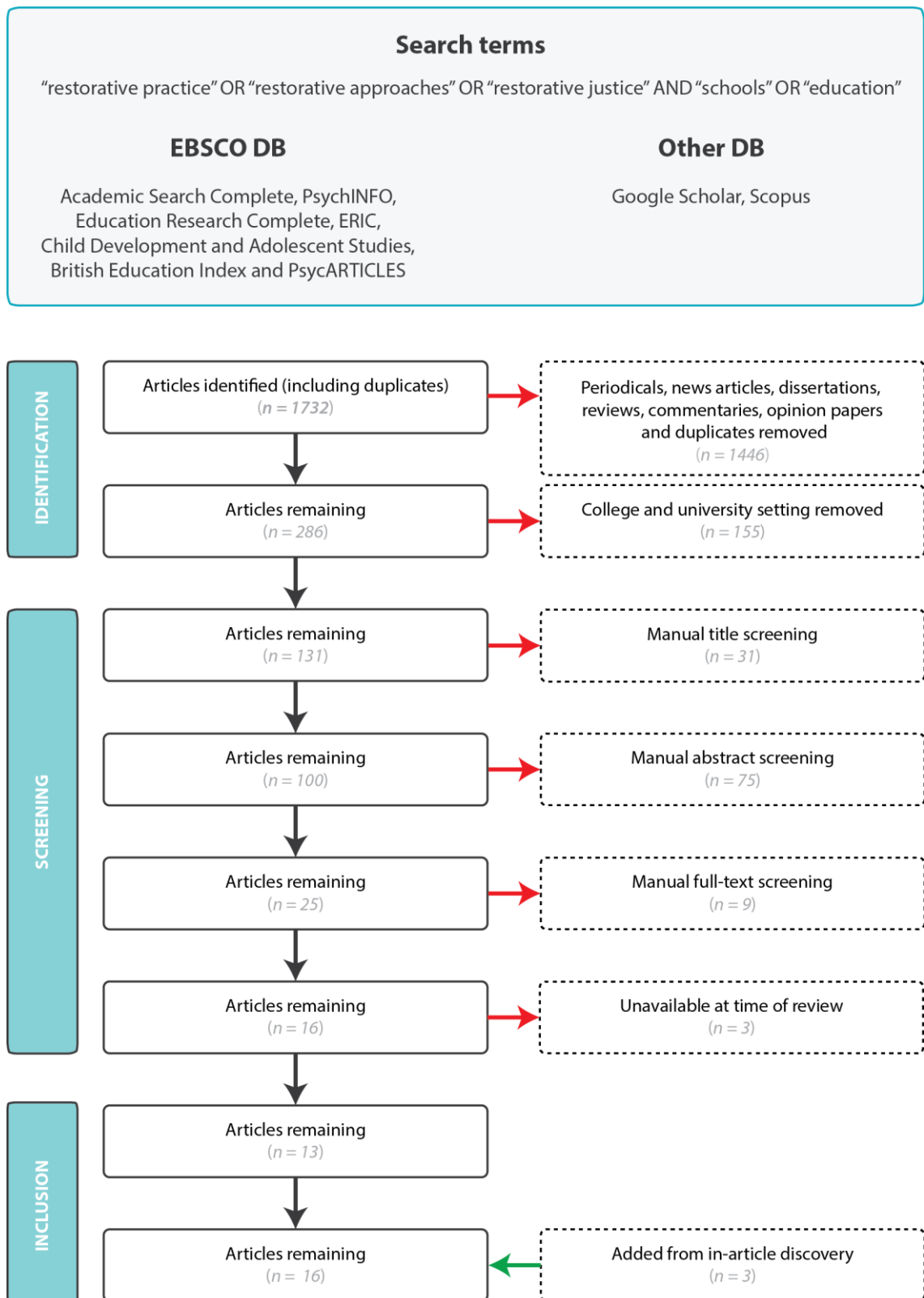


Figure 2.2.1 Systematic Review Process Flow Chart.

Schematic shows the three stages of the systematic review: identification, screening, and inclusion. Numbers of research articles being retained/excluded are shown for each stage.

Table 2.2.2 Papers Included in the Literature Review.

Author/s	Title	Year	Country	Research Design	Participants
Y. Anyon, A. Gregory Rutgers, S. Stone, B.J. Farrar, J.M. Jenson, J. McQueen, B. Downing, E. Greer and J. Simmons	<i>Restorative Interventions and School Discipline Sanctions in a Large Urban School District</i>	2016	USA	Quantitative sociodemographic and discipline records analysed	180 Schools
T.J. Bevington	<i>Appreciative evaluation of restorative approaches in schools</i>	2015	UK	Appreciative Inquiry. Case Study.	Six staff members at one inner-London primary school
Duncan Gillard	<i>Restorative justice-based practices in settings with children and young people: Examining the views of young people</i>	2015	UK	Qualitative. Interviews.	6 young people who had been involved in a restoratively run meeting
A. Gregory, K. Clawson, A. Davis and J. Gerewitz	<i>The Promise of Restorative Practices to Transform Teacher-Student Relationships and Achieve Equity in School Discipline</i>	2015	USA	Quantitative. Student Surveys	412 high school students from 29 schools
C.L. Ingraham, A. Hokoda, D. Moehlenbruck, M. Karafin, C. Manzo, and D. Ramirez	<i>Consultation and Collaboration to Develop and Implement Restorative Practices in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Elementary School</i>	2016	USA	Single-case study design, qualitative	1 secondary school – teachers, students and families
Jean Kane, G. Lloyd, G. McCluskey, R. Maguireb, S. Riddell, J. Stead and E. Weedon	<i>Generating an inclusive ethos? Exploring the impact of restorative practices in Scottish schools</i>	2009	UK	Case study	1 primary school, 1 secondary behaviour unit and 1 secondary school

D.Knight and A. Wadhwa	<i>Expanding Opportunity through Critical Restorative Justice Portraits of Resilience at the Individual and School Level</i>	2014	USA	2 case studies, qualitative	2 adults about 1 students' case
G. McCluskey, G. Lloyd, J. Kane, S. Riddell, J. Stead and E. Weedon	<i>Can restorative practices in schools make a difference?</i>	2008	UK	Pilot Project, Interviews with staff, individual and group interviews with pupils and parents/carers. School staff survey (627), pupil survey (1163) Analysis of school data Focus group with staff Observation of meetings	18 schools (10 secondary, 8 primary) across 3 Scottish Local Authorities.
G. Shaw	<i>Restorative Practices in Australian Schools: Changing Relationships, Changing Culture</i>	2007	Australia	Qualitative, interview and survey	Secondary school
V. Standing, C. Fearon and T. Dee	<i>Investigating the value of restorative practice an action research study of one boy in a mixed secondary school</i>	2011	UK	Action Research case study. Observation and discussion with staff	
J.B. Stinchcomb, G. Baxemore and N. Riestenberg	<i>BEYOND ZERO TOLERANCE Restoring Justice in Secondary Schools</i>	2006	USA	Mixed Methods. Case Study.	1 primary and 1 secondary school
Skinns, Du Rose and Hough	<i>An Evaluation of Bristol RAiS</i>	2009	UK	Mixed Methods. Evaluation of pilot study.	
M. Thorsborne	<i>Community Accountability Conferencing</i>	1996	Australia	Evaluation of a trial of RJ conferencing	31 conferences

J. Wearmouth R. Mckinney and T. Glynn	<i>Restorative justice in schools: A New Zealand example</i>	2007	New Zealand	Case Study	1 young person
J. Wearmouth and M. Berryman	<i>Viewing restorative approaches to addressing challenging behaviour of minority ethnic students through a community of practice lens</i>	2012	New Zealand	Individual case study, qualitative	
Youth Justice Board for Youth Justice Services	<i>National standards for youth justice services</i>	2004	UK	Evaluation of restorative practices in schools across England and Wales	20 Secondary schools and 6 Primary schools. Pre-test and post-test survey data from 5000 pupils, 1150 staff, and 600 individual interviews

2.3 Critical Analysis of the Literature

2.3.1 Introduction

Although there is a wealth of literature on the efficacy of restorative practices within the criminal justice sector, there is a limited amount within educational settings. A significant amount of the research also measures efficacy through collecting school behaviour data, such as incidents and exclusion rates. In the first part of this section I will describe and analyse the papers that had a quantitative, or mixed-methods design. These results are interesting as they provide insight in to whether restorative practices in schools have been successful. However, they do not provide the qualitative data required to gain insight in to how the participants have experienced restorative practice and approaches. As the focus of my research is on the experiences of the young people involved in restorative practices, I will also outline research that focussed on collecting the views of all participants of restorative practices.

2.3.2 Efficacy of Restorative Practice

2.3.2.1 Quantitative Outcomes

In this section I will describe and analyse the papers that use quantitative measures to identify the efficacy of applying restorative practices in an educational setting. Quantitative research deals with numbers and the variables must be measurable. It provides characteristics of an observed phenomenon and attempts to draw on correlations or causality with other variables. There are 6 papers in this section that meet these criteria. The majority of the studies used descriptive statistics (4/6), one used linear regression to analyse a large data set, and one study used multilevel modelling to analyse the data. Additionally, five of

the research papers complemented their statistical evidence with qualitative data. I will describe these findings in the next section.

Stinchcomb, Bazemore and Riestenberg (2006) conducted an exploration of how well restorative justice principles could be applied to educational settings. The schools that participated in the pilot project used restorative meetings and then provided the researchers with school-wide statistics. Quantitative outcomes indicated that there was an overall reduction in behavioural referrals and suspensions. In one of the elementary schools (ages 5 – 10 years old) behavioural referrals for physical aggression reduced from 7 to fewer than 2 per day which was supported by the number of acts of physical aggression reducing from 773 in 1997/1998 to only 153 in the school year 2000/2001. There was also a reduction in school suspensions from 126 in the school year 1999/2000 to 42 in the year 2000/2001. The researchers also speculated that there was a link between the use of restorative approaches and daily attendance rates as it increased from 85% in 1997/1998 to 95.5% in 2000/2001, after the introduction of restorative approaches. Although they do acknowledge that it is difficult to identify this link and ascertain whether it was restorative approaches. It may be that it contributed to the increase, alongside other interventions. Also, another outcome that the researchers posited was more difficult to link to the introduction of restorative approaches was that daily attendance increased to 95.5% in 2000/2001 from 85% in 1997/1998. Interestingly, in the second elementary school there was an increase in the number of in school suspensions, and a significant decrease in the number of out of school suspensions. This may have been due to a new district policy that aimed to keep children in school rather than sending them home, but staff reported that being able to offer restorative meetings made this transition easier. In the junior high school (12 – 15 years old),

out of school suspensions reduced from 110 in 1998/99 to 55 in 2000/01. The option for in school suspensions was not available so out of school suspensions were not simply just replaced with these. These statistics would imply that the introduction of restorative practice had a positive effect on behaviour and suspension rates. However, this should be concluded with caution as the evidence only comes from 3 schools. The authors do not provide any control group statistics either. It is therefore unknown whether the changes in rates of suspensions are seen in other schools in the district. The authors do mention that there were district wide policy changes that could have resulted in fewer suspensions and behaviour referrals. It would have therefore been useful to know if schools not applying restorative practice approaches had seen changes due to policies. The authors did provide support for the descriptive statistics with qualitative data and I will discuss the qualitative outcomes of this paper later in this chapter.

Skinns and Hough (2009) also conducted an evaluation of restorative approaches in 4 schools in the south Bristol and compared these to schools that had not. This research also used a mixed method design, and here I will look at the quantitative results. Similarly, to Stinchcomb et al (2006) the researchers included descriptive statistics on a range of measures. They also found that the mean attendance rate for the restorative approach schools increased, in this study from 78.23% to 81.75%. There was also a decrease in the number of fixed-term exclusions across all four schools ranging from 45% - 50% less after implementing restorative approaches. However, there was also reductions seen in the schools that were not using restorative approaches. This may have been because of a concerted effort being made to reduce exclusions overall in the UK. Unlike Stinchcombe et al, the researchers did compare whether there was any

difference between the restorative approach schools GCSE grades when compared to the non-restorative schools. Independent *t*-tests showed that there were no significant differences between them for A-C grades. This evaluation study was also highly involved in the implementation of restorative approaches, so they could have control how the staff received training and selected staff to have further training so that they could be skilled facilitators. The researchers also acknowledged that the schools had not exclusively used restorative approaches and therefore it is difficult to conclude whether the outcomes are due to restorative approaches alone. Again, I will refer to the qualitative results of this research later in the chapter.

Kane et al (2009) conducted a large pilot study in Scotland across 18 schools. This particular paper focuses on 3 of the schools and took a more in-depth look at the selected schools. They reported some quantitative data and demonstrated that in one of the primary schools there were no exclusions over the two terms following the implementation of restorative approaches. In addition, there were zero referrals for extra support from behaviour support. They also reported a decrease in playground incidences. In the secondary behaviour unit, the researchers reported that return rates to the unit were much lower than previous years. Similarly, in the mainstream secondary school there was less use of time out of the room and an overall decrease in exclusions. However, the researchers do not supply any indication of numbers or percent increase or decreases. It is therefore not possible to know how much these events decreased. It may be that the primary school had only a small number of exclusions in previous years and that a reduction to zero would not indicate the success of restorative approaches, but rather a consequence of a different cohort. It is also difficult to draw conclusions from the data as it only focuses on three of the schools. However,

the focus of this paper was on the qualitative data and therefore they did not draw strong conclusions from the descriptive statistics. Instead, they were included to supplement and back-up findings from the qualitative data.

Ingraham et al (2016) conducted a case study in a single school following the implementation of restorative practices. The research design was qualitative; however, they did provide a small amount of quantitative findings from the school data. They reported that in this elementary school there were significant reductions in the number of behaviour referrals to the office. The total number of referrals dropped dramatically from 133 (Year 1) to 20 (Year 3). There was a 100% reduction in referrals for battery, physical injury, possession of knife/inappropriate items, and property damage. There was also a 33% reduction in referrals for annoying others. However, it is unclear from these findings and the fact that it is only descriptive as to whether there were any other factors that may have influenced these findings. Interestingly, teachers reported that they selected restorative over punitive solutions 97% of the time in 2013 which was up from 85% in 2012. The 85% selection rate in 2012 indicates that restorative practice was already very popular in this school, suggesting that it may have been prepared and more open to a formalised approach. This willingness to engage in the approach could have affected the positive results shown in this research project.

Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz (2016) conducted research on students' experiences of restorative justice in schools. In particular, they were interested in finding out whether restorative practice can reduce the racial discipline gap in the USA. African Americans are disproportionately overrepresented in school discipline (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). They drew their findings from 412 student surveys from 29 different schools. They conducted hierarchical linear

modelling and regression analyses to analyse the surveys. They found that teachers who used the most restorative approaches had more positive relationships with their diverse students. They also found that those teachers who used the most restorative approaches issued fewer exclusion referrals than teachers who had not implemented many restorative approaches. There were some encouraging results that showed that restorative practice could be successful in narrowing the racial discipline gap with fewer referral issued for Latino and African American students being made by high restorative practice teachers when compared to lower restorative practice users. Similarly, to Skinns and Hough (2009), the researchers were highly involved in implementing restorative approaches and offered two full day training followed by consultation follow up from trained professionals. This is large scale study, across wide ranging schools, which increases the ability to be able to generalise the findings to other educational settings. A key limitation, however, is that they used student and staff surveys without follow up interviews to gain more insight into the participants' views. Furthermore, they did not have an outside professional to verify the quality of the restorative practice used and whether they followed the training. There may also be some individual differences as to why teachers were considered more respectful than others, it may be that those who used more restorative approaches already approached their students with a more restorative ethos. Its non-experimental design means that only correlational conclusions can be drawn and not causal links.

Anyon et al (2016) also conducted a study that investigated the disparity between the discipline gap between black and white students as well as a general review of restorative practice on behavioural outcomes. They wanted to know whether introducing restorative practice in first semester was associated with lower odds

of referrals in the second semester. They looked at the use of restorative practice after a large district implemented it across 180 schools in the USA. Through multilevel modelling of student discipline records (9921) they found that those groups who are overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions (Black, Latino and Native American young people; SEN students and boys) had greater rates of participation in restorative interventions than their peers. There was a significant effect of those who had received a restorative intervention in the first semester, who were less likely to receive office discipline referrals and suspensions in the second semester. The models also revealed that even after accounting for restorative intervention participation at the student and school level, Black students and those eligible for free lunch and SEN students still had higher odds of receiving second-semester out of school suspensions relative to their peers. This finding was still present no matter how serious the behaviour or frequency or the type of school setting (e.g., grade level, school size), indicating that despite participation in restorative practice, disparities in exclusionary discipline remained for Black students, low-income students, and students in special education. Additionally, the author found that there was a huge variation in use of restorative practice across the 180 schools ranging from 0% to 75% of the time. They did find that schools with higher use had lower rates of out of school suspensions and that there was a general move to keeping students in the classroom and school rather than removing them. Again, this was a correlational study and the researchers were unable to control all, if any of the variables.

Furthermore, since the researchers were not involved in the implementation of the restorative interventions, it is not clear how the staff decided who would/would not be selected for restorative intervention. It would have been interesting to have

had some qualitative measures in a study of this scale. Students who were more likely to engage in the process and accept responsibility were chosen more often to be involved in the restorative interventions. This could have affected the results as these young people may have been less likely to re-enter the discipline system in the second semester.

2.3.2.1.1 Summary of Quantitative Research

Many of the papers that used quantitative measures employed descriptive statistics to describe the data (4 out of 6 studies) with only two of the six papers using inferential statistical measures (linear regression and multi-level modelling) in their research. Many of the results do show that restorative practices appear to have a positive effect on reducing the number of suspensions and challenging behaviours in school. However, as most of the research did not control for other variables it is difficult to conclude whether these changes are wholly due to the implementation of restorative practices. In particular, the researchers in much of the research were not involved in implementing the restorative practice or monitoring how it was being applied, meaning we know little about the quality, consistency and frequency of the meetings. As outlined in the introduction chapter, the benefits of restorative practice are not only about reducing the number of suspensions and exclusions but also about giving individuals the opportunity to learn and change attitudes and make long term changes which may not be measurable over one or two years of data. It is therefore important that any statistical evidence for restorative practice is complemented by qualitative data.

2.3.2.2 Qualitative Outcomes

Qualitative research is empirical research where the data is non-numerical. It is used to develop further understanding of a phenomenon and provide insight into

the subjective experiences, opinions and feelings of the participants involved in the research. Data is collected through naturalistic methods such as interviews, observations, case studies and focus groups. The goal of qualitative research is not to be able to generalise the findings but to deepen practitioners' understanding of experiences.

From the systematic search I identified 13 papers that fulfilled the criteria of being qualitative in nature. They use a variety of methods to elicit participants' thoughts and feelings of restorative practice. In this section I will describe the research and provide some critical analysis of the findings. I have separated this part of the chapter in to three sections. The first section will describe school informed outcomes, which will include qualitative data referring to overall findings about school ethos and culture and the perspectives of school staff. I will then describe findings related to the perspectives and outcomes of parents and/carers in relation to their involvement in restorative practice. Finally, I will describe the data on children and young people's outcomes and perspectives of their involvement in restorative practice.

2.3.2.2.1 School Informed Outcomes and Perspectives

Thorsborne's (1996) study is widely considered to be the pioneering research that investigated the effects of school-based restorative approaches. Thorsborne's research indicated very positive initial indications of students' views of the restorative justice approach. Data was collected through structured interviews conducted after students had been in a conference. The analysis of these interviews showed that students experienced high levels of satisfaction, perceived improved relationships with other participants, and showed increased levels of empathy towards other participating individuals, such as teachers and family members. There was also reported a low rate of repeating the same

behaviours, although no figures are provided. Nearly all schools in the trial had changed their thinking about behaviour management as a result of involvement in restorative conferencing. A strength of this research is that they used an inter-rater reliability process and found an 87.5% agreement between experts who rated the interviews. It is important to acknowledge, however, that each interviewer will have a unique interpretation of the interview transcripts.

As described in the previous section Skynns and Hough (2009) evaluated a pilot project in 4 schools in Bristol. They collected some qualitative data on the impact of restorative approaches that were not quantified in local authority data. They interviewed staff and gathered their perspectives and reflections on the use of restorative practice in their schools. They found that staff felt that restorative approaches were an effective way of dealing with bullying incidents and improved pupil-pupil and staff-pupil relationships and interactions. They said that they believed that it helped staff and students to talk calmly and not shout and that this helped to deescalate challenging situations. It helped to improve relationships between staff and students as the staff reported that students now saw them as 'humans'. Staff also reported feeling more empowered to understand other people's points of view and express their feelings, without getting stressed and were motivated to use the approach to deescalate conflict. Staff members were also more likely to enjoy improved well-being. Staff also indicated that restorative practices moved them beyond a crude understanding of young people's behaviour to a deeper understanding of the subtleties and complexities of the causes and consequences of challenging behaviour and conflicts. Despite all the positive feedback regarding restorative practices it was resisted by some staff as they felt it threatened their power. They reported that the approach hindered their ability to be able to choose to simply discipline and punish if they deemed it to be

appropriate. Some staff felt that it threatened long established practices in the school and were perhaps resistant to change. The majority of staff members expressed the view that punishment was still necessary and that restorative approaches should be used alongside already used sanctions and exclusion should be valued. In particular, that exclusions should be used in serious cases and in cases when the student has shown no remorse.

The researchers also specifically referred to one school as it was the only one that used a whole-school approach. This school reported that the atmosphere was calmer throughout the school. They also reported that the emotional literacy level of both the staff and students was improved since the introduction of restorative approaches. This was a large-scale research into restorative approaches across four schools that implemented restorative approaches and two schools acting as controls. There was a large amount of quantitative data as well as interviews with several members of staff and focus groups in each school. However, they did not conduct any interviews with individuals in the control schools. It would have been interesting to hear the perspectives of what they thought about their behaviour policies as a comparison.

The researchers provide detailed information for each of the schools that implemented restorative practice, including demographics and the reason for taking part, which enables other researchers and practitioners like myself to be able to relate aspects of the research to their own practice in this area. They also provide detailed information on the interviews and the questions asked so that, if appropriate, researchers could replicate this research in other schools.

Bevington (2015) conducted an appreciative enquiry study in which they worked with a selection of staff who all worked at the same inner-London school. The primary school had already been using restorative practice, and the purpose of

Bevington's case study was to explore the perceptions of restorative practice from 6 staff members. The participants included teaching assistants, class teachers and senior leadership team members. Appreciative Inquiry method was used, taking four months to complete and consisted of four phases. In the first phase, individual interviews were conducted with a focus on what was working well in the application of restorative practice and how this could be built on further. Next, the group had to imagine their school had won a national award for implementing restorative practice successfully and create a rich picture of what it would look like and how to get to that point. In the third phase, the group had to write 'provocative propositions' with the aim to make connections from the present with the future. The final phase involved the group devising an action plan for restorative practice in their school for the future. Bevington identified that the theme of congruence, in terms of values, expectations and outcomes came from the appreciative inquiry. For example, the staff members said that the school's values should mirror restorative practice values in order for it to be successful. There had to be congruence in practice, with the senior leadership team following through the principles with staff, and then the staff would be more successful at applying the principles to students. For example, if the staff did not feel judged or blamed, they were less likely to judge and blame students.

Similarly, to Skinns and Hough, participants in Bevington's study also felt that they still wanted to be able to be flexible in their approach to discipline and sanctions. They stated that following a restorative approach should not replace their own professional judgement on what behaviour policy to apply to a given situation. Bevington also found that the participants could identify different factors that could explain a lack of efficacy of the approach. For example, they identified that pupil low self-esteem, staff members that might have low emotional

intelligence and staff not having enough time or lacking confidence could affect the outcomes for the application of a restorative approach. Bevington concluded that the application of restorative practices could be losing its connection with its humanistic roots, as hard-working staff members were left feeling guilty and inadequate when trying to use it. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that it may not always be appropriate to use restorative practice in response to conflict and that staff value their autonomy.

This was an interesting piece of research and has high trustworthiness. A large amount of detail was provided about the sample, how data was collected and how the data was analysed, strengthening its trustworthiness. The study focussed in detail on one school and range of levels of staff. However, like other research in this literature review, the author did not provide a lot of detail about how the school used restorative practice. As this was a qualitative piece of research this may not be as important as the study's aim was to draw on individuals' experiences and not to evaluate efficacy. I would question whether appreciative inquiry is the most appropriate method to explore people's views. Appreciative inquiry focuses on the positives of what is being discussed and therefore may not provide an opportunity for participants to share views deemed to be critical or negative. The staff members may have felt like they could not speak frankly and openly as the sense was that they had to be supportive of the school's approach. It would have also been interesting to hear the views of the students as the adults reported what they thought the young people thought. It would be useful to compare the views of staff and students and to see if there was congruence.

As discussed in the quantitative section, Stinchcomb, Bazemore and Riestenberg (2006) conducted an evaluation of the use of restorative practices in 2 separate

schools. The staff who were trained in restorative approaches reported that it did not work in one school as the teachers did not trust the process as the principal would still give in-school suspensions without consideration of other options. The school had also not taken on restorative justice as a whole-school approach or ethos. The other school (the junior high school) had the benefit of six months previous experience of using restorative approaches. They had a dedicated room for restorative interventions and a planner who helped with alternative disciplinary options. In the junior high school students even requested restorative approaches or established meetings on their own. The overall need for full conferences declined as the staff and students applied the principles in response to conflicts before things escalated. This showed that there was a cultural change in the school and the ethos had been embedded. Staff reported that restorative approaches can be a slow process and a patient and problem-solving attitude is essential for its success. Again, staff expressed the opinion that embracing restorative approaches does not negate the use of more punitive deterrence-based measures. Staff said that both punitive and restorative behaviour approaches could be applied simultaneously. The staff said that they thought that better training was needed and an opportunity to reflect on practice would be appreciated. The qualitative outcomes in this study are mixed and this is most likely due to the differences in the schools and what their ethos was prior to the study, however this is not made clear in the paper.

McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddell, Stead and Weedon (2008) evaluated the previously described pilot study in Scotland. This paper explored the successes and challenges of schools experiences and how these could contribute to implementing restorative practice to other schools. Data was collected via a range of qualitative measures including interviews with a range of local authority and

school staff, interviews with staff, parents and students, school staff survey (627), pupil surveys (163) and observations. They found that restorative interventions impacted on discipline and school climate and that there was evidence of commitment and enthusiasm to the pilot study by key school staff. These factors led to an increase in the use of restorative practices. The secondary schools progress was more mixed than the primary settings. They also identified that at any one time only some staff and some departments were using restorative language and conversations with the students. In the secondary schools that were using restorative approaches most stated that there was development and use of restorative meetings to address conflict between pupils and between staff and pupils. It is hard to interpret or generalise these findings as the secondary schools used diverse approaches to develop restorative practice. The pilot study did not outline how restorative practice had to be applied, and some schools applied whole-school approaches whilst others applied it to highly individualised cases. The researchers found that when the school's ethos was already positive the restorative interventions were more successful.

Staff in the McCluskey et al's study felt that after using restorative approaches they could work through issues as a team and apply the principles to their own interactions. They reported that it was best when approached as a whole school issue and not left to senior management team or pastoral staff to implement the interventions. Although it was widely accepted that a whole school approach is most successful some senior members of staff were resistant to the approach. Key staff members reported having to demonstrate to some subject heads that restorative practice worked even with the most difficult pupils, before attempting a wider, whole school approach. One head teacher, however, who was initially sceptical then had the training and was convinced restorative practice was a

powerful tool. This helped to get the whole school on board with the approach. A dominant theme again was that many staff, particularly, but not always, in the secondary schools talked about difficulties reconciling their current behaviour management or discipline policy and practice with more restorative approaches. Staff remained unsure about its use in more serious situations and most indicated that punishment was sometimes still necessary. Several headteachers in the pilot primary and secondary schools emphasised that they were still prepared to exclude pupils and that certain kinds of behaviour, such as violence, merited an immediate exclusion.

The early findings of this evaluation of a large pilot study in Scotland are very positive overall. There was strong evidence of real and sustained engagement with the project overall and substantial gains made in many of the schools. The researchers provide good details of the schools involved in the pilot study and practitioners will be able to see how it could relate to their own schools or workplaces. This is the largest study of its kind in the UK and is producing promising results. They used large range of methods to elicit participants views and this means that participants were more likely to feel they could be open and honest about their feelings and reflections on implementing restorative practice. Like many of the studies in this chapter the researchers were not able to control how restorative practice was implemented and are therefore unsure of what the participants are referring to in detail. They also did not provide any data from control schools.

Knight and Wadhwa (2014) outlined two portraits provided by two different staff members about two separate students and their experience of restorative justice and how they interpreted the usefulness of applying these approaches. Overall the staff members both reported that the use of restorative interventions resulted

in increased resilience and that teachers were aware of the student's individuality and their levels of resiliency. The staff also thought that overall the number of suspensions had reduced in their schools and in particular in the cases they were describing. They believed that the students learnt to mediate and regulate their own behaviour in the classroom and applied lots of the principles themselves. The two members of staff also thought that more improvement was made when there was increased parental involvement. This was an in-depth paper that clearly outlines two portraits of the uses of restorative practice in great detail. It would have been useful to have heard the perspectives from the students themselves to ascertain whether they were more resilient or had internally adopted the principles.

Shaw (2007) conducted a study in 18 primary schools in Australia that had implemented restorative practices. They used surveys and questionnaires to review the use of the approach in the 18 schools. Staff members reported that it repaired relationships between staff and students and helped to solve disputes. The staff also reported that it helped to not only improve overall behavioural management, but also created opportunities to teach transformative skills such as ethics, ideals of justice and citizenship. In the alternative primary provision, there was no effect seen on reducing challenging behaviours and the characteristics of the students, but the staff did change the way that they dealt with the behaviour. There was a reduction in the use of time-out for violent behaviour. It would have been interesting to see that if this continued, would there have been a long-term effect on behaviour over time, with a change in behaviour policy ethos? The researchers provided good detail of how the approach was implemented across the 18 schools and asked participants what made their setting appropriate for trying restorative practices. However, there was little

consistency across the schools and how they used restorative practice. This was made clear and was well justified as each school had their own needs and were at different stages in their behavioural management policies. This is a large-scale study that provides lots of positive feedback and raises important questions to consider for future research.

Wearmouth & Berryman (2012) and Wearmouth, McKinney, & Glynn (2007) conducted studies on restorative practice in New Zealand and reviewed its use in schools and the wider community. They reported that restorative approaches can be used to resolve differences between a number of 'stakeholders' and not just those directly affected by the conflict. They found it helped to develop the understanding of the intricacies of complex relationships and help repair damage to relationships and resolve ongoing tensions. They identified that there was a shift in focus from the young person or 'wrong-doer' in the eyes of the school to the whole community being responsible. The community as a whole is responsible for 'putting things right'. Staff members in the study also said that it made justice visible and more productive. This shows that when restorative practice works well it is open and transparent. These studies are interesting as they justify the use of restorative approaches in terms of their historic and cultural relevance outlined in the introduction chapter of this thesis. Both studies draw upon evidence from case studies which allows the researchers to focus in detail on specific young people and the impact on the school and the wider community. There is detail provided for each case and this offers a detailed good level of context for readers to transfer to their own practice.

Standing, Fearon and Dee (2012) conducted an action research project to study the effect of using restorative approaches with a 13-year-old boy in a Secondary school that had recently adopted a whole school approach to restorative practice.

The student's oppositional behaviour had deteriorated at school and he was at risk of engaging in offending behaviour in the future. The pupil took part in a restorative conference facilitated by the researcher and was identified as the 'wrong-doer' in the conflict situation. The young person was chosen to be part of the project because he demonstrated some inconsistencies in his behaviour. He was articulate and reflective in meetings, but then defiant and disruptive in the classroom. Qualitative data was collected over six weeks through a variety of means including observations, staff and pupil interviews. Behaviour incidents and any restorative approaches used were also logged on an electronic database by teaching staff. Over the six-week period the pupil continued to be involved in behavioural incidents in the classroom. Examples of the incidents included not following instructions, shouting out and throwing things across the room. The student was also involved in a serious racial incident and another incident of minor theft. All the incidents were dealt with in a variety of ways, including meetings and impromptu conferences facilitated by teachers and pastoral staff members. Standing, Fearon, & Dee concluded that the introduction of restorative practice had not improved the student's behaviour.

The participant sample in Standing et al.'s clearly explained there were some issues with the transparency of the study. For example, the restorative approaches used by the school were not clearly defined and it was therefore difficult to know what a restorative conference consisted of. Furthermore, there may have been some inaccuracies when describing the different applications used by teachers as everything was labelled a restorative conference. This term may have been used when the approach applied was not actually a conference and may have not followed its principles. Additionally, behaviour incidents were described by the researcher where it was made clear that restorative practice had

not been used to deal with these. The researchers did state that there was a lack of treatment fidelity and consistency and some teachers were still 'telling off' the student. Due to these limitations it is difficult to truly measure the effect of restorative practice when it was not applied consistently. It is difficult to draw wider any conclusions about restorative practice and its ability to change student behaviour when only one participant was recruited for the study. Furthermore, the qualitative interview data collected was not presented separately to other data which makes it difficult to know where data and opinions came from. Also, more weighting was given to teacher's interpretation of the pupil's behaviour, which is at odds with the restorative justice principles. Although the participant was interviewed, it is not clear what the findings of this were and therefore the young person's voice is lost.

Ingraham, Hokoda, Moehlenbruck, Karafin, Manzo, and Ramirez (2015) conducted an embedded single-case study and described the preliminary results of a restorative practice programme over three years. Qualitative and ethnographic methods were used to document the perspectives and beliefs of the participants. The methods used included focus groups, interviews, and open-ended survey questions. They found that within the school most teachers embraced a restorative practice paradigm and the associated strategies. By the second year most of the sixteen responding teachers had aligned themselves with restorative practice principles, even when comparing it with the more traditional punitive approaches to school discipline the school was previously adopting. By the end of the third year there was even further support for uses of a restorative practice behaviour policy.

The researchers also reviewed an anonymous survey regarding behaviour in the school and found that more teachers selected restorative approaches over

punitive solutions and this choice increased over the three years. For example, 100% of the teachers selected “I encourage all those affected by an incident to consider the way forward, if at all possible” option on the survey. There was also a shift in the ethos of the school, where previously there was blame put on the young person and the ‘wrong-doer’, by the end of the study teachers were selecting the response of ‘all those involved in an incident need to decide how to repair the harm done.’

Ingraham et al’s study also found that teachers requested, received, and valued modelling of restorative practice in their classes. As a result, the school psychology intern, who was part of the research team, scheduled times with teachers to come into their classes and model restorative practice, conflict mediation to restore harm. In the follow up review of implementing restorative practice approaches most of the teachers in the school reported high levels of comfort and reported they would recommend the approach to the other schools in this large district.

Ingraham et al’s study provides good detail on why the school was chosen and detailed information on the demographics on the school and the wider community. Unlike many of the other pieces of research the authors also provide detail of how they implemented restorative practice in the school and had psychology graduates as part of the team working closely with the school. This means that they were able to control some aspects of the study, including the nature of the restorative practice used in the school. The researchers were involved in providing further training and consultation during the duration of the research and they acknowledge the impact of this. Despite detailing that a large proportion of the school (80%) were Hispanic or Latino, the researchers themselves did not include anyone from this cultural background. This means

that some cultural communications or subtle messages may have been missed or misunderstood. In these types of studies, it would be useful to have, if not someone in the research team itself, but consultants who can provide cultural insight. This is also a piece of research conducted in one school, and therefore the findings need to be interpreted with caution.

2.3.2.2.2 Parent Informed Outcomes and Perspectives

There were very few papers that measured the outcomes of restorative practice from the perspective of the parents/carers of the young people involved (2/16). I will briefly outline their findings here. Thorsborne's 1996 study did ask family members for their views and they expressed positive perceptions of the school following the implementation of restorative approaches. Families also stated that they had comfort in approaching the school on other matters, knowing that things would be dealt with in a different way.

Ingraham et al (2016) followed up their case study in the school with 293 parents two years after the project started through an anonymous survey. The results of the survey showed that before implementing restorative practice in the school 67% of parents were worried their child may not graduate from high school. After two years this had reduced to 47% of parents. Some of the parents also stated that they had learned to resolve conflicts with their children using communication and using restorative approaches to resolving conflict. The researchers found that there was an increase in parent engagement in home -school relationship. Parents also appreciated the workshops that the researchers offered that provided guidance on restorative practice in the school and how it could be used at home.

2.3.2.2.3 Children and Young People Outcomes and Perspectives

Thorsborne's (1996) study followed up with participants involved in restorative conferences. Interviews were conducted following 56 conferences and were conducted at 2 -3 weeks after and then again four months later. They interviewed what they referred to as the 'victims' and 'offender' about their experiences of the conferences and how satisfied they were with the overall process. They found that overall students experienced high levels of satisfaction with restorative approaches. The results showed increased levels of empathy towards other participating stakeholders and a perceived improvement in relationships with other participants of the conferences including the adults. The interviews also revealed that the majority of 'offenders' perceived they were more accepted, cared about and more closely connected to the other conference participants following restorative conferences. The 'offenders' also reported having higher levels of empathy and understanding towards 'victims' and supporters. Perhaps because of this improved understanding, the majority of 'victims' felt safer and more able to manage similar situations than before conferencing. Although this study has a large number of participants and two separate interviews, the paper provides little detail of how the study was conducted and no details on the school. It was also not made clear where the different findings came from, whether from the first interview or the later one. It would have been useful to know whether these results were short term gains or relatively long term and still seen 4 months later. This is the first type of research undertaken in restorative practice in schools and has provided promising results that influenced others to explore restorative approaches in its application in schools.

Skinns et al's (2009) review of restorative practice across four schools in Bristol also included interviews with 26 students, ranging from individual interviews, pair

interviews and group interviews. The students had all been involved in some form of restorative approach themselves. The researchers found a large variety of views. They found that students felt that restorative approaches were an effective way of dealing with bullying incidents with half the students feeling that there was less bullying in the school as a result of the approach. However, they did find that a few pupils discussed how conferences did not resolve all bullying issues. It would have been interesting to have had details about what the students said had made these times different and why things had not felt resolved.

The researchers reported some interesting views of the young people on the use of more punitive sanctions, such as exclusions. Some of the students reported that they did not see exclusions as punishments. However, a large proportion of the students stated that exclusions should be used in more serious cases and especially if student involved showed no remorse during the conference. They expressed clearly that more punitive measures should still be able to be done within a restorative behaviour policy. Students felt that punishment alone can make them angrier and make a bad situation worse and leaving them feeling that no one cares. This is interesting as many of the studies that surveyed and interviewed staff members found that they also valued being able to use more punitive measures alongside a more restorative behaviour policy. It appears, in this study, that students may be of a similar opinion.

Restorative practice did also receive critical feedback, with some students saying that restorative conferences could be thought of as a process by which the 'wrong-doer' is getting away with it. There was a sense that some of the participants saw restorative approaches as easier than a traditional punishment. Students also reported that there were still injustices in the distribution of the type of punishments and use of restorative practices, and that some students were

still shouted at. They also felt that there was still some imbalance in the conferences where teachers would still only see a situation as binary, for example 'victim vs bully'. However, they acknowledged that when applied appropriately restorative conferences could help to restore the imbalance.

Despite some of the critical feedback the overall response to restorative practice was positive and students felt it could make a genuine positive change. Some students said that it could help to improve the power imbalance between staff and other students. Some reported that they could now challenge staff when they felt singled out and saw the restorative staff as more approachable and helpful when compared to staff maintaining a more punitive approach. Students also revealed other positive outcomes such as being able to get on better with those they had conferences with long-term, developing empathy skills and being more willing to take responsibility. Also, along with staff, students who were empowered to understand other people's points of view and express their feelings, without getting stressed or involved in escalating conflict, were more likely to enjoy improved well-being.

This is a large-scale study that provides excellent and thorough detail on how the research was conducted. It provides enough information so that other schools could implement restorative practice approaches and evaluate it. The study provides a comprehensive list of recommendations for schools so that they can be successful restorative settings. The study provides a good mix of methods to show the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of restorative practice.

As discussed in the quantitative and school outcomes and perspectives section Stinchcomb, Bazemore and Riestenberg (2006) conducted an evaluation of the use of restorative practices in 2 separate schools. They collected a small amount of data on young people's views on the use of restorative practice in their schools,

to complement the statistical data. Young people said that they liked that “things got resolved” and that found ways to solve problems and go forward, even when the resolutions were not obvious. They also valued that everyone is “treated equally” in restorative practice. Students also started to express greater empathy for others, including peers and adults involved. They appreciated that they could see the progress ‘first hand’ and that they found it easier to settle conflict and make friends with those involved quickly. Similarly, Ingraham et al (2015) found that the students learned skills in communication, empathy, and relationship building. They even found that the students were eager to have classroom restorative practice lessons and actively participated in these lessons. This is promising in terms of the schools being able to maintain the principles of restorative practice as everyone needs to support it, including the students. Both studies did not focus on the outcomes or views of the individual young people involved and instead focussed on the effect on the culture and ethos of the school. Thus, putting more emphasis on the responses from the adults in the research.

McCluskey et al (2009) conducted a large pilot study across 18 schools in Scotland. They met directly with 138 primary pupils and 93 secondary pupils, either in groups or in individual interviews. This 2009 paper primarily discussed the views of the staff members and the effect on the whole school regarding how they developed restorative practices. Students indicated that they were listened to and felt that RP had led to teachers “not shouting”, “listening to both sides” and “making everyone feel equal” in the process. They also expressed how much they valued a fair hearing which is one of the key principles of a restorative approach. This shows that they had a good understanding of the principles underlying restorative approaches. Furthermore, like other research in this area

most students indicated that punishment was sometimes necessary, and that restorative practice cannot just replace sanctions such as exclusions.

Knight and Wadhwa (2014) focussed their research on the views of two members of staff and their experience of using restorative practice. However, they did indicate some positive outcomes for the young people they were discussing. One of the young people changed their attitude and became a 'serious' student and went on to gain a scholarship to college. The changes in behaviour were not necessarily always consistent but there was very little escalation of conflict and, importantly, the young people were able to control the escalation of their own behaviours.

Shaw's (2007) study across 18 primary schools in Australia researched the implementation of restorative approaches. They found that there were many positive outcomes for the students. They were more able to acknowledge consequences for their behaviour and developed an understanding of the impact of their own behaviour on others. The students were encouraged to develop empathy and remorse through personal reflections on the process. They reported that the best environment for successful restorative practice was when the notions of democracy and student voice principles were adhered to. Restorative practice was considered by students to be most successful when it matched with school aspirations. Again, this research focussed on the adults' opinions of restorative practice. However, it was a large study and showed promising results. A limitation is certainly that it does not outline in more detail what the students thought about restorative practice.

The Youth Justice Board (2004) evaluated twenty secondary schools and six primary schools in England and Wales following the implementation of restorative justice approaches. They took pre-test and post-test survey data from 5000 pupils

and conducted individual interviews with some of the students. Their key findings were that 89% of students reported satisfaction with the process overall and they valued being listened to. The research found that most restorative conferences conducted led to a resolution. However, when they compared the control and experimental groups, they found no significant difference in attitudes and levels of victimisation.

Gillard (2015) conducted an exploratory study in order to gain an insight into the experiences of young people who had been involved with restorative practices. The participants were selected from a secondary school and a local youth offending team. Senior members of staff at both settings were asked to identify suitable individuals for the research. Six participants were recruited for the study, all aged between 14-18. Each participant had taken part in a recent restorative meeting. The researchers describe that the participants represented a range of young people, including those who could be deemed to be the 'victim', the 'offender' or from neither category. Gillard conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants as soon as possible after the restorative meetings, the longest period being eight months after the meeting. The resulting data was analysed using thematic analysis and two overarching themes developed: 'open and honest enquiry' and 'empowerment'. In the first theme the data suggested that restorative practice approaches allowed all young people to acknowledge the role that they themselves had played in causing harm to others. Furthermore, participants shared the view that simply creating a safe environment allowed some of them to be honest and enabled them the ability to repair harm. This was a critical finding, as being honest can be a highly upsetting and emotional experience for young people and is such an important part of the success of restorative practice. The findings of this research also suggest that when blame

is removed from the situation, it is replaced by a sense of empathy and a shared understanding. In addition to these findings Gillard also found that when young people felt empowered, they had a vested interest in the outcomes of the meeting compared to more punitive measures. The young people in this study did not experience the restorative meetings as a punishment, but rather a process that was both challenging and enriching.

Gillard provided details of a clearly defined sample and the process of data analysis was transparent and enhanced by interrater reliability. A limitation in the design of this study was that the data collected was retrospective and the amount of time between the intervention and the interview was not consistent between participants. This could have hugely affected the participants' ability to recall their thoughts and emotions about the meeting accurately. Another limitation was that the intervention that the participants were involved in was not described in any level of detail so there is no way of understanding how the restorative meeting was structured and how closely it followed restorative principles. Since the participants were selected from a range of settings, it is highly likely that there was variation in the interventions delivered, which affects the validity of the findings. The method of semi-structured interviews was appropriate for exploring the views of the young people involved as it is flexible. The sample was drawn from both educational and the criminal justice settings and therefore some findings may not be applicable to just educational settings. Gillard does not separate these two settings in the findings, and it would have been interesting to see if there were any differences in the views of the young people in the youth offending team and the secondary school. In terms of the study's dependability it would have been preferable to see a higher number of participants from each setting, and age range would have allowed for more of a comparison.

2.3.2.2.4 Summary of Qualitative Research

In summary of the qualitative research, perhaps the most important finding is that the views of those involved are predominately positive. The findings suggest that restorative practice can, amongst other things, improve relationships, be applied to deal with bullying, increase empathy and deescalate conflicts. Some of the findings were more critical of restorative practice or highlighted difficulties in its application, such as, that it can only be successful if schools already have a restorative ethos and that it can leave the teachers feeling inadequate. The findings also suggested that, in a few of the papers, both the young people and the adults felt that more punitive approaches were still appropriate and should be utilised.

A key characteristic of the research is that there is no standard methodology used to collect participants views, but rather there is diversity in choice of methodology. For example, the researchers used appreciative enquiry, focus groups, surveys and interviews to collect data. Also, similarly to the quantitative papers, the researchers did not provide an outline of how restorative practice was applied or a description of the settings in which it was used. This means that in terms of research credibility it is more difficult to transfer the findings to other settings and any future research.

2.4 Rationale for Current Research

The literature and research presented in this literature review demonstrates that there is a good evidence base for restorative practice to be used in schools. However, a large amount of the papers included come from outside of the UK (9 out of 16). Furthermore, many of the UK based studies are quite small in scale and focus on a small number of participants or settings. The evidence base and

understanding of restorative practice in the UK is growing and, as I outlined in the introduction chapter, there is an appetite for alternative solutions to punitive measures within the UK. However, most of the evidence in the UK still comes from the criminal justice setting rather than educational settings, suggesting a gap in the knowledge base for practitioners in UK educational settings.

There is a large amount of research on restorative practice that focuses on the efficacy of restorative practice and on the reduction in exclusion and other sanctions. However, there are nine papers within this literature review that have included young people's views and experiences. These are interesting papers as it is important that the voice of the young person is heard and acknowledged in this process, especially since the introduction of the new Code of Practice (2014). However, some of the papers focussed more on the adult's perceptions and did not give a lot of detail on young people's experiences. This is surprising as the focus of restorative practice should be the impact that it has on the young person.

There is also a distinct lack of research being carried out in specialist settings such as pupil referral units and alternative provisions. This is also surprising as this seems a natural extension to the application of restorative approaches being predominantly applied in the criminal justice system. As outlined earlier in this thesis there is a huge overlap in the characteristics of those in a pupil referral unit and eventually individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

There is also a dominant theme in the research that it is not always clear how restorative practice has been applied and what is meant by 'restorative approach'. In some research this has ranged from an informal chat in the corridor to a structured restorative conference.

For this research I intend to focus solely on the experiences and perceptions of the young people who have been involved in a structured restorative meeting. I will also conduct my research in a pupil referral unit as I have identified this as a gap in the literature.

Chapter 3 | Methodology

3.1 Overview of The Chapter

In this chapter I will outline the aims and purpose of the current research and give a description of the methodological approach I used to address these aims. I will start by describing my epistemological and ontological positions to help explain how I came to use the methodological approach I chose. I will then discuss some of the ethical considerations I made when designing my methodology. Finally, I will give specific details about the participants selected for the research, the sampling method used to recruit these participants, and the procedures I used to collect, store, and analyse data. My goal is to show how the methodological approach I chose is appropriate for the aims and purpose of this research, and how it fits more broadly with my epistemological and ontological positions. I will end by convey how my reflexivity played an important role in the research process.

3.2 Epistemological and Ontological Position

Ontological positions tend to vary between two well-known stances: the view that reality exists entirely separately from human practices and understanding (realism) as opposed to the opinion that reality cannot be only one perspective and will always reflect one's own perspectives (relativism). Ontology attempts to address the meaning of 'reality' and the theories that determine what reality is (Crotty, 1998). Bhaskar (2008) described the development of an ontological position as "reflecting on what must be the case for science to be possible" (Bhaskar, 2008, p.38).

Epistemology addresses the nature of knowledge and what is possible for us to know. One may believe that it is possible to obtain 'the truth' through knowledge production (realist) or that an absolute truth is impossible (relativist) because humans tend to have different perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Epistemology addresses how knowledge is created and known (Scotland, 2012).

Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) determined that researchers should be explicit about which ontological and epistemological stance they will adopt for research. This is because it is important to state a position that communicates the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide an individual researcher when they choose to operate within a particular paradigm or take a particular methodological approach (Hays and wood, 2011). The idea is that the ontological and epistemological positions that I adopt will determine the relationship between myself and the 'reality' I hope to explore, as well as influencing the types of methodological approaches I use. Although, as a researcher, it is natural that I should move somewhat between positions at various points in the process of my research, it is important that I state my overall position at the outset.

In this research, I adopted a critical realist position. Critical realism accepts that there are enduring and stable aspects of reality that exist. These aspects of reality exist independently of human conceptualisation (Fade, 2004). Critical realism also recognises the socially embedded and fallible nature of scientific enquiry (Bhaskar, 2013). Ontologically speaking, as a critical realist I position myself somewhere between realism and relativism (Willig, 2013).

In addition to being clear about a researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, Ponterotto (2005) has also highlighted how important the differences attached to the meaning of experiences made by individuals are. It is important to value these in terms of an individual's experience of reality.

When I was considering my epistemological position for this research, I considered not only my views as a psychological researcher, but also my personal views as an individual. I have the opinion that reality has an aspect of being socially defined, but that individuals will interpret this reality differently (Bhaskar, 2013). I apply this approach in my research and my practice. I am interested in learning the subjective experiences of the individuals that I work with.

The research I have conducted reflects my epistemological position in that there is a social reality of restorative practice that the participants can experience, but also that the way in which they experience restorative practice meetings and make sense of their experiences will be different.

Bhaskar (2008) claimed that critical realism relies on epistemological relativism to some extent. Bernstein (2010) did, however, warn critical realists against 'bad relativism' where "there is really no truth...no objective facts, and no universal validity claims" (Bernstein, 2010, p.109). The position of critical realism does not require one to deny that certain phenomena exist. In light of this, I tried to remain mindful of the multiple 'realities' uncovered by the findings, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013) and de Souza (2014).

3.3 Research Aims and Question

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of young people who participated in restorative justice meetings. I was interested in their thoughts and opinions about whether the process worked, and what they would change about it. Since my literature review revealed that there has been very little research on young persons' opinions and experiences of participating in

restorative practice meetings, I felt that an exploratory research approach would be the most appropriate way to address my research aims. The DfE Code of Practice (2014) makes it clear that professionals should be engaging and acknowledge the 'voice of the child' in all the work that they do. It is hoped that the research I have undertaken will therefore not only shed light on an underexplored area of educational psychology, but also give some young people a voice in an area dominated by the views of the adults that work in this field.

The specific research question for the current research is:

What can we learn from young people's views about being involved in restorative justice meetings?

3.4 Design

Since the critical realism position lends itself to the qualitative research design paradigm (Ekstrom & Danermark, 2002), I chose a qualitative methodological approach to address my research aims and question. Qualitative methods have been deemed useful in gathering a variety of responses on an individual's experience (Alderfer & Sood, 2016), and are considered ideal for gaining insight on how people experience events and make sense of their world (Willig, 2013). Using qualitative methods also allows one to be able to capture the voices of a specific group (Carroll & Rothe, 2010). Willig also claimed that qualitative research has an "open-ended, exploratory nature" (Willig, 2013, p.20), which is especially useful in a context in which there is a lack of existing research. In my case I found that one of the main advantages of using qualitative methods was that it enabled participants to freely share their ideas with me and respond to

questions in their own words and style, thereby directly supporting the voice of the child objective (DfE Code of Practice, 2014).

Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall (1994) proposed that research that fits a qualitative paradigm should be focussed on “the context and integrity of the material” (Bannister et al., 1994, p.1) that is collected. As a researcher I was therefore aware that in the process of interpreting my results I could be influencing the findings of the research. Through a reflexive approach I aimed to keep focused on the need to maintain the integrity of the findings.

One of the important aspects of qualitative research is that it should present findings in a non-numerical format (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and should focus on meaning and “inductive logic” (Robson & McCartan, 2011, p.19). In the context of my research, I was therefore mindful that the research should not be driven by pre-existing theories and assumptions, but rather be driven by the content of the raw transcriptions collected verbatim.

Robson (2011) also emphasised that it is important that qualitative research gains the perspective of the participants whilst also acknowledging the impact of the researcher. This was also highlighted by Banister et al (1994) who stated that “qualitative research is the interpretative study of a specified issue or problem in which the researcher is central to the sense that is made” (Banister et al, 1994, p.2).

3.5 Research Procedure

This research was conducted within an inner London Borough where I was working as a TEP. All the participants attended an alternative provision, previously known as the borough’s Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

3.5.1 Participants

Five male participants and one female participant, between the age of 14 – 16 years old were purposively recruited to take part in the current research. They all attended the same alternative provision setting in the borough. I made a choice not to collect any demographic information for ethnicity or specific age as I was not interested in these details for the current research. I did not collect any information on what situation had led to the participant being involved in a restorative practice meeting. I made these decisions as pre-study exploration indicated that the potential participants were typically mistrusting of external adults, due to Constabulary forces involvement. By not collecting this information I was able to reassure the participants that I was able to keep their information confidential and that I would have no effect on their placement in the provision or judgment on their circumstances.

3.5.2 Recruitment

I initially contacted the alternative provision setting when I attended a Restorative Practice Interest Group at my EPS. I contacted the deputy manager of the setting and explained what the purpose of my research would be. When they agreed I could conduct my research at their setting we discussed how I could gain consent and recruit participants. We agreed that it would be appropriate to use an opt-out method for consent from the parents/guardians of the young people (see Appendix 1). We agreed this was appropriate because the setting often used this method to gain consent for other research and activities. I also felt this would be appropriate because of the age of the participants. I felt that it was important that fully informed signed consent was obtained from the young person, and that they had this choice after parents or guardians had not opted them out. Letters

explaining the research were sent to all the parents/guardians for those at the setting (see Appendix 2). No 'opt-out' slips were returned to the setting or me.

I then arranged that I would visit the setting on several days to conduct the data collection. The deputy manager, along with other staff members, identified the young people who had been involved in an incident that led to them having a restorative practice meeting and provided me with a list of names. A behaviour support assistant then introduced each participant to me in my private room, where I explained the research (see Appendix 3) and gained fully informed consent from them before conducting the interview (see Appendix 4).

3.5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs)

The aim of qualitative interviews is to provide an insight into a phenomenon. Interviews give the respondents space and time to reflect in and upon their responses (Folkestad, 2008). For this reason, a semi-structured interview schedule was adopted for this research. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to respond in their own words and express their own meaning (Willig, 2013). Semi-structured interviews aim to elicit the interviewees' ideas and opinions through presenting the topic of focus and questions relating to those topics. They should not, however, lead the interviewee towards any preconceived choices (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Hugh-Jones, (2010) recommends that interview schedules should only include a relatively small amount of open-ended and non-leading questions. These are the best type of questions for enabling the interviewer to elicit responses that are detailed enough to answer the research question, but that the responses are not shaped by the wording of the question themselves. I therefore based my schedule on these principles (see Appendix 5). I also deemed that it was appropriate that

I was able to follow up questions and prompt and probe to elicit more detail. This helped the participants to give examples and expand on any explanations (Leech, 2002).

3.5.4 Recording

All six interviews were recorded using a recording application on a mobile phone ensuring that the recording could be protected by a password and fingerprint security system until I could transfer the interview to my computer. When the recording was moved to the computer it was encrypted and again stored in a password protected file. I numbered the recordings and stored separately a list of names associated with the interview recording. The participants were then given pseudonyms so that I could refer to them in my analysis and findings without using their real names. I used pseudonyms rather than numbers because I did not want to lose the humanity in the results. I then transcribed the interviews myself. As Bird (2005) notes, this is a “key phase of the data analysis” (Bird, 2005, p.227) and aids in the researcher being able to “immerse” themselves in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87).

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is often used in qualitative research to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) from a data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). Through thematic analysis the researcher searches for themes that are important to the description of the phenomenon being researched and in relation to any social issues (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). Although thematic analysis was originally conceived of as an analytic approach for transcripts, it is now more broadly

considered to be complete methodology, because the choice to use it influences so many different aspects of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is a flexible method that is not necessarily linked to one ontological or epistemological position and is not associated with one theoretical framework. Despite the flexibility of the approach, it remains important for researchers to make their epistemological position clear. The reason for this is that research epistemology guides what can be said about the findings and informs how meaning is theorised (Willig, 2013). Thematic analysis from a critical realist position “acknowledges the ways in which individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, whilst retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality” (Priya & Dalal, 2016, p. 211).

When conducting a thematic analysis, the researcher needs to make a number of choices that should be reflected upon. I was required to reflect on these choices considering my ontological and epistemological position, critical realism. The first choice to be made is: what constitutes a theme? Braun and Clarke (2006) highlighted the importance of researcher judgement in this choice and the ability to retain flexibility in this choice. It was deemed appropriate for the purpose of this research that a theme will be considered if it appears to capture something important in relation to the research question.

The second choice that has to made is what approach will be used to identify themes or patterns within the data: inductive or deductive. An inductive or bottom-up method means that the themes are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990). In inductive thematic analysis the data has been specifically collected for the purpose of research. This method is not driven by the theoretical interests of the researcher and is not coded with any analytical preconceptions.

Inductive approaches allow themes to be generated through the thorough and intense analysis of the data collected (Patton, 1990). A deductive or top-down approach is driven by a theoretical framework. Deductive methods seek to provide a more detailed account of specific aspects of the data set gathered.

Given the lack of research on young people's thoughts and perspectives of restorative practice methods, inductive approaches seemed most appropriate for this research. My reasoning for this is because there are limited prior assumptions around the possible findings of this research. Based on my ontological and epistemological position it was important not to impose already assumed knowledge on to the interpretation of the data. This is somewhat necessary in deductive thematic analysis as it requires the researcher to identify specific areas to place focus on within the data. I employed a semantic approach (Boyatzis, 1998) to analysing the data. This means that I identified specific and explicit themes within the data in order to then draw meaning from them through interpretation.

For the purpose of this research I employed the Braun and Clarke (2006) six phase process for carrying out thematic analysis (Table 3.3.6.1). The first phase involves becoming familiar with the data through transcribing, reading, and repeated reading of the data. Their idea behind why this is an important part of the process is because it encourages the researcher to immerse themselves in the data thus becoming familiar with the depth and breadth of all the content.

After this phase the researcher will be familiar with the data and initial codes can be identified (phase 2). Boyatzis (1998) described a code as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be accessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (p. 63).

Phase three then involves sorting the codes that have been identified into potential themes. At this point, an initial thematic map is employed so that the researcher can begin to sort the codes into themes. Once a set of main themes has been devised, the researcher then refines the themes and subthemes (phase 4). The thematic map is then revisited to check if it reflects the original data set (phase 5). Braun and Clarke suggest that this is done across two levels, firstly by reviewing the coded extracts by rereading and considering if they appear in a coherent pattern. The second level then involves a similar process in which the validity of the themes is considered in relation to the data set. The researcher then produces a final idea of the different themes and how they fit together as a whole picture in relation to the data collected. The final phase (phase 6) involves the 'essence' of each theme being identified and demonstrating what aspects of the data it captures. Each theme is then named to give the reader of an awareness of what the theme is about and what it captures.

Table 3.3.6.1: Phases of Thematic Analysis.

Phase	Description of process
1. Familiarising self with the data	Transcribing data; reading and rereading the data and noting ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding for interesting features of the data, in a systematic way across all the data
3. Searching for patterns and themes	Reviewing codes and beginning to collate these into potential themes
4. Reviewing themes	Checking whether the data supports the themes i.e. at the level of the coded extracts and across the data set and generating an initial map of themes
5. Defining and naming themes	Refining the thematic map in relation to specific themes and how they link to tell a story. Generating clear definitions and names of themes
6. Writing the analysis	Selecting vivid extracts to illustrate themes. Analysing these in relation to how they answer the research question

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In quantitative research validity and reliability are considered discrete categories. Yardley (2008) argued that in qualitative research it would not be appropriate to apply the strict frameworks of reliability and validity that are applied in quantitative research. Quantitative research often aims to explore a known phenomenon, producing results that can be replicated and applied in many different situations. In contrast qualitative research is usually undertaken on situations and interactions that are context-specific. For that reason, I did not aim to produce results that could be replicated, but instead give insight in to specific situations which are relatively rare in nature. As a qualitative researcher I did, however, aim

to produce results that could offer premises for generalisability. Even though my research was carried out in one setting, the setting will share similar features of comparable provisions.

Reliability could be seen as the interpretations made by the researcher (Stenbacka, 2001). In qualitative research, instead of analysing reliability and validity, 'trustworthiness' is analysed (Mertens, 2014). Shenton's (2004) framework to measure the trustworthiness of the proposed research will be used to establish the trustworthiness of the research. Below is a table outlining the criteria and a description of this (taken from Shenton, 2004), and what I did in order to meet these criteria.

Table 3.7.1 Trustworthiness of the Current Research.

Definitions adapted from Shenton, (2004).

Definition	Research feature to meet criteria
Credibility criteria	
How consistent the researcher's interpretation of the data is with the experiences and perceptions of the participants.	Using well established measures and data analysis process. Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis method.
	Gaining familiarity with research setting or organisation. I made several visits to the alternative provision to familiarise myself and introduce myself to the staff members. I also kept regular communication with the deputy manager of the provision to ensure when was an appropriate time to attend and conduct my interviews.
	Enabling the participant to be honest throughout the research process. I ensured that the participants were aware that, despite opt-out consent being obtained from their parents/carers, they themselves had the right to withdraw and would provide informed consent. I also stressed confidentiality and made them aware that their experiences, whether negative or positive, would not be shared with others until the data is anonymised. I explained that I would be the only person to re-listen to the recordings, and that recordings were only undertaken to enable me to transcribe the interview accurately. I made it clear that the interview

	transcriptions would be fully anonymised before being shared with my supervisor. I also confirmed that no names or identifying information would be used in the thesis document.
Transferability criteria	
After research is disseminated to practitioners, they may relate aspects of the research and the findings to their own practice.	<p>Contextual information will be provided in the thesis to allow the reader to relate to the content</p> <p>I provided a relevant description of the provision, where the research took place and the participants involved (whilst still respecting their confidentiality and anonymity).</p>
Dependability criteria	
Is the research methodology described in enough detail that it could be repeated in the future?	<p>This was achieved by providing information about the research methodology, the rationale for this choice and how it was carried out. I also provided detailed information regarding the process of completing this research. For example, by gaining consent, stakeholder interests, debriefing and any issues relating to these.</p>
Have correct and appropriate research practices been followed?	<p>I reflected on the methodology chosen and remained reflective and reflexive throughout the research process. I often referred to ethical guidelines throughout the process. I also discussed any issues I faced so that researchers in the future could consider these in similar research.</p>

Confirmability criteria	
Demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not the researchers own predispositions.	I ensured that I explained and justified my research decisions throughout the process. I also kept a research journal so that I reflected on my own perspectives and interpretations throughout the process, in particular when conducting the thematic analysis. I also checked my analysis throughout the process with my director of studies.
Reflexivity during the process.	I sought support from my director of studies and peers regarding the interpretations I made during the data analysis process. This ensured I could check I was not allowing my own biases to influence the interpretations. I remained reflexive throughout the process and made sure I included an explanation in each chapter that demonstrated this.
Need to reduce researcher bias	I kept a research journal where I reflected on my own biases to make sure I check that I was not letting these influence my data analysis and to be transparent when they did.

As the current research employed a qualitative methodology it was important that I remained reflexive throughout the process and pay special attention to the impact of social, historical and political opinions I hold. I was mindful of how these could affect the interpretation of the data I collected. To achieve this, I kept a thorough and detailed research diary that I incorporated into this final thesis. This allowed for transparency.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted for the current research from the university of East London Ethics Committee (see Appendix 6) and from the Ethics board within the borough where the alternative provision was located (see Appendix 7). The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (British Psychological Society, 2009), Code of Human Research Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2010) and the Health and Care Professions Council (Health and Care Professionals Council, 2015) Standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists was referred to in the design and undertaking of this research.

The following ethical considerations were made:

3.8.1 Age of Participants and Consent

The age of the participants could have posed potential risks because young people may not understand that they have the right to exercise their own opinions. For example, they may not know that they are entitled not to consent to the research. Young people are not always aware that they have these rights as they are taught to follow instructions in school (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Fully informed assent was gathered from all participants in the form of an information sheet and accompanied by a signed consent form. The BPS code of human

research also states that as the participants were all under the age of 18 I had to gain consent from their legal parent/guardian (British Psychological Society, 2010). The alternative provision often uses an opt-out method to gain consent for research or activities conducted in the provision. I decided to use this method to gain parent or guardian consent.

3.8.2 Risk of Harm

There was a potential risk of harm to the participant as the interview could negatively affect their mood. The interviews were focussed on topics that could be distressing for the young person. The interviews could have triggered feelings of unresolved anger or anxiety, especially if the young person had not understood the process or felt that they were treated unfairly in the process. I countered this possibility by taking a considered and careful approach to the interview. Open-ended questions were used so that participants can move away from uncomfortable questions. As the interviewer, I was aware of how the participant was responding to the questions and considered if these were potentially causing harm. I was able to change the line of questioning and check that the participant was still comfortable with the type of questions I was asking.

3.8.3 Debriefing

Debriefing was an important aspect of the current research due to the potentially sensitive nature of the interviews. I summarised the key points with the participant and clarified that this resembled how the participant had spoken about their experience. The participant was also asked about how they are feeling after the interview and whether they had any questions. They were informed that they can discuss the interview and their reflections on it with their keyworkers.

3.8.4 Right to Withdraw

I explained that the participants had the right to withdraw from the study and discussed how they could do this. I also explained to the participants, however, that that they could not withdraw their data once the analysis had begun. They were provided with a date at which I would begin collating the data. I explained to the participants that if they chose to withdraw their data that the recording, transcript and any forms relating to them would be destroyed.

3.8.5 Confidentiality

The identity of the participants was protected throughout the research. I transferred the recordings to a password protected file on my computer and the participants were assigned a number. Their names were stored in a separate location, just to ensure that if they wanted to withdraw, I knew which interview to destroy. I only referred to their numbers when using specific extracts and have removed details of the provision. For the participants this was an important aspect of the research and I had to be very clear that their confidentiality would not be broken throughout the whole process, especially in the recordings of the interviews.

3.9 Reflexivity

“Reflexivity is the term used for explicit consideration of specific ways in which it is likely that the study was influenced by the researcher.”

(Yardley, 2008, p.250)

Braun and Clarke (2006) identified that an advantage of thematic analysis is that there is flexibility when analysing the data. This flexibility enabled me to determine

which themes I believed were prevalent in my data. As there is no strict guidance on what constitutes a theme, as a researcher I am able to play an “*active role...in identifying patterns/themes*” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.80). It was therefore critical that I kept a reflective diary during my research. This meant that I was able to maintain transparency in relation to any bias that may have arisen during the data collection and analysis of the interview transcripts.

Reflexivity can be considered as the attempt to remove subjectivity and create a more objective research report. Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) posited that a common misconception within positivist research is that objectivity naturally increases when researchers reduce subjectivity. They concluded that just because as a researcher I would be exposing my position, this does not mean that this removes subjectivity. Banister et al state that researchers should be reflexive and open to their biases so that they can view subjectivity as a pragmatic and theoretical resource.

It must be acknowledged that, to some extent, I will guide the identification of themes based upon my own motivations and interests. Therefore, the use of inductive thematic analysis increases the need for reflexivity as the data must be coded without being influenced by my own preconceptions. Transparency in relation to these preconceptions must therefore be maintained throughout the research journey (Banister et al., 1994; Yardley, 2008).

I must also remain aware that I may be perceived as having two roles, one as a practicing trainee educational psychologist and the other as a researcher. One way in which I have considered this is that I am not conducting the research in a setting that I have ever worked in in my capacity as a trainee educational psychologist. I will also need to ensure that I explain to the staff members and the participant's that my role is exclusively as a researcher. I will need to remain

aware of my own bias though, as I am both a researcher and practitioner. I need to be aware of my own opinions on 'good practice' and reflect on how these could influence my questioning, and also my interpretation when analysing the transcripts.

Chapter 4 | Findings

4.1 Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter I will present the key themes and subthemes identified through the thematic analysis of the transcripts. Complete transcriptions of the interviews conducted can be found on the memory stick attached and an extract from an interview in Appendix 8. The themes and subthemes are presented in a thematic map (see Figure 4.2.1), followed by a description and interpretation of each theme. In order to maintain the anonymity of the participants and the alternative provision, names of the individuals have been replaced with pseudonyms (see Appendix 9).

4.2 Themes

I identified three themes from the six interview transcripts using the thematic analysis method (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In addition to the major themes, there were several subthemes highlighted and these can be seen in the thematic map (Figure 4.2.1). Two examples of the coding process are provided in Appendix 10 and a table of all the themes, subthemes, codes and quotes in Appendix 11. I have also provided a list of the initial codes generated (see Appendix 12) and how I began to arrange these in to themes (see Appendix 13).

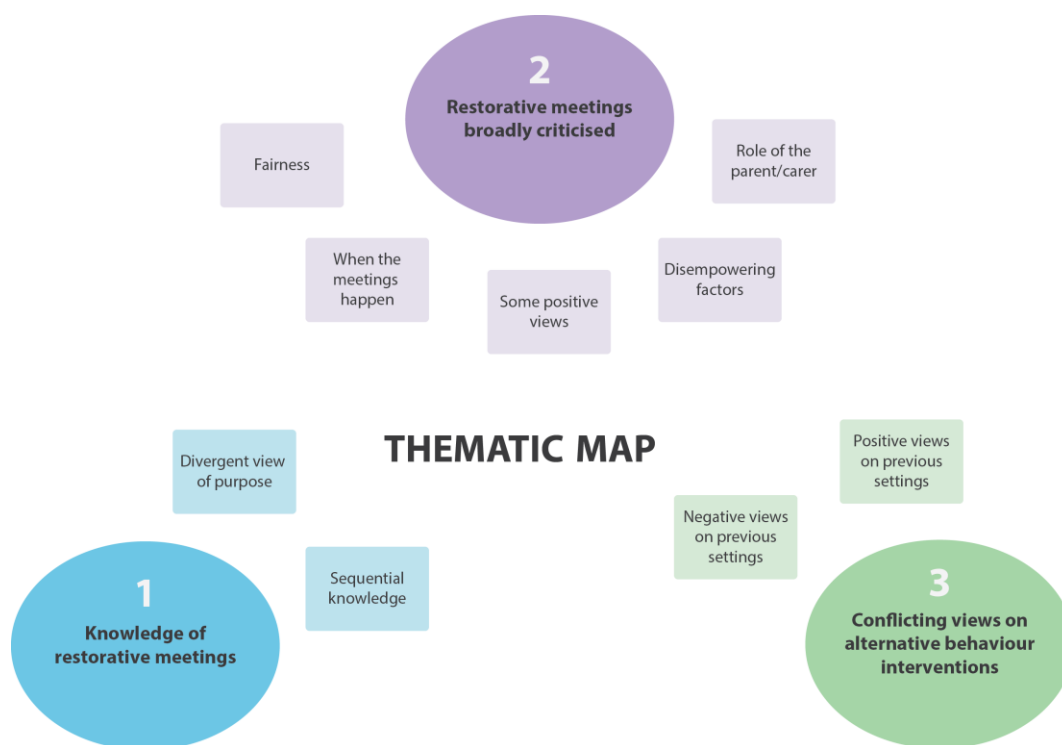


Figure 4.2.1 Thematic Map.

A thematic map illustrating the themes (dark colour) and subthemes (lighter colour) identified from the interview data.

4.3 Theme 1: Knowledge of Restorative Meetings

The young people who I interviewed had some knowledge of restorative meetings and were able to tell me about meetings that they had been part of in the past. The subthemes show that they had a good knowledge of the process, including knowledge of the sequence of events surrounding the meetings and processes within the meetings. However, the findings also show that although they had a good knowledge of the processes, they lacked a deeper understanding of the purpose of restorative meetings.

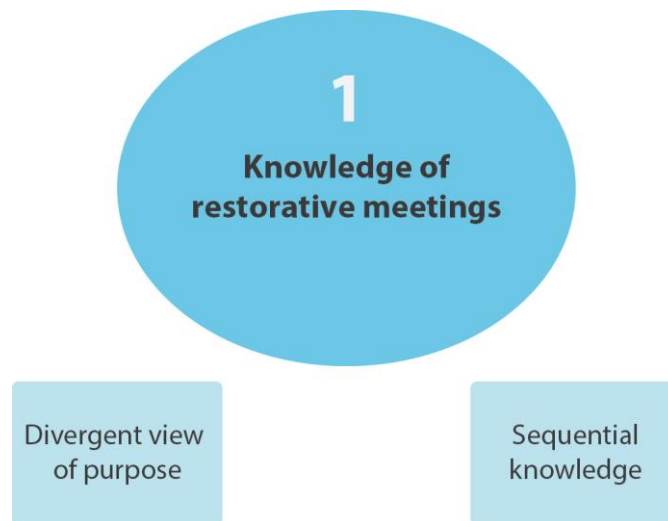


Figure 4.3.1 Theme 1: Knowledge of Restorative Meetings.

4.3.1 Process Knowledge

The young people I interviewed all had a good knowledge of the process of restorative practice, but at the beginning of the interview they required some scaffolding to recognise the language associated with the meeting. Nazir, for instance, needed some explanation of what restorative meetings are, and then was able to recall and go on to explain to me what the meetings entailed and had a good knowledge of the process:

Researcher: "... so have you heard the term restorative practice?"

Nazir: "No, not really"

(after explanation)

Nazir: "I do remember, uhhhh actually..."

(Interview 4, lines 2 - 3)

Adnan was aware that a meeting occurred after an incident, but he did not recognise the language I used initially. After some scaffolding, he told me that he just referred to it as a meeting:

Researcher: *“So first of all, what do you, so have you heard of the word restorative meetings”*

Adnan: *(Shakes head)*

Researcher: *“So, they don’t use that sort of language? What do you call that meeting that you have when you come back after you’ve been sent home?”*

Adnan: *“you just call it a meeting innit”*

(Interview 2, lines 1 - 5)

Similarly, Daiyan was unable to recall the name of the meeting but had a good knowledge of what a restorative meeting is and when they occur:

Daiyan: *“yeah (indecipherable) I don’t even know the name of it yeah, but I think there is one just if we get sent home we come in the next day and with our parent for a meeting”*

(Interview 1, lines 7 - 8)

The participants also knew who attended the meetings and demonstrated this when asked or volunteered the information towards the beginning of the interview:

Interviewer: *“like who was there?”*

James: *“yeah so the headteacher, my mum, me and that’s it”*

(Interview 5, lines 18 -19)

Stacey: *“you know what my keyworker has always been with me because she knows how to calm me down”*

(Interview 6, lines 19 - 20)

Despite not being familiar with the language that is used in restorative meetings, the participants had a good level of knowledge about when the meetings occur in the setting. They commented that the meetings happened after they had been sent home for their involvement in an incident:

Rafi: *“so I was playfighting and then I got sent home for play fighting and then in the next day I had a meeting”*

(Interview 3, lines 13 -14)

Nazir: *“they have the meeting you know after they’ve sent you home”*

(Interview 4, lines 10 – 11)

One participant talked about how his parents are called after he is sent home and they are expected to bring him in the next day for the meeting:

Adnan: *“they call innit and they're like you have to bring Adnan in tomorrow for the meeting”*

(Interview 2, line 44)

As well as a good knowledge of the process of when the meetings take place and in general what they were about, the participants also had some knowledge of what happened within the meetings, in terms of the sequence of events, for example the order of who speaks within the restorative meeting:

Nazir: *“Students go first and the teachers, always so yeah, I say my opinion first and then the teacher talks and they say their opinion”*

(Interview 4, line 54 - 55)

Stacey: *“We always speak first and, like tell the situation, whatever has happened from that point of view”*

(Interview 6, line 31 - 32)

4.3.2 Views on the Purpose

The young people talked to me about what they thought the purpose of the meetings were. This was quite varied and their thoughts on the purpose of the meeting were interesting as they interpreted the meaning in different ways. For example, their understanding of the purpose of the meetings deviates somewhat from the purposes and aims of restorative practices. Some young people saw that part of the aim was to simply inform them of what they had done to be sent home and why they had to come to the meeting:

Daiyan: *“.... if you wanna know why you got sent home then obviously you have to come back the next day...”*

(Interview 1 lines 37 - 38)

Adnan: *“yeah, they tell you why you've been sent home”*

(Interview 2, lines 42)

Some of the young people suggested the purpose of the meeting was to develop an understanding not just of what they had done but why they had been involved in an incident:

Rafi: *"... then in the next day I had a meeting to discuss why I was play fighting"*

(Interview 3, lines 13 - 14)

Nazir, in particular, (interview number 4) showed a deeper understanding of the purpose of the restorative meetings, namely, not only to inform him of what he had done, but also for him to understand his role in the incident:

"Because then when you have that meeting it's an understanding of what you've done wrong"

(Interview 4, lines 13)

"... well basically the reason why you've been sent home, they talk about it, whether you're in the wrong or not..."

(Interview 4, lines 40 - 41)

"Understanding that I've made a mistake ... that's it the moral to it"

(Interview 4, line 65)

Nazir also spoke about the purpose of the restorative meetings in relation to allowing the participants to have space to reflect and talk openly about the incident:

"More understanding, give you time to like, give you time to calm down and understand the situation and come in the next day and talk about it"

(Interview 4, lines 79 - 80)

When asked about what they thought about the reason they are asked to have a restorative meeting, some of the young people commented that it was so that they could go back in to class:

James: *"It's so you can come back to class and just put it behind you and that"*

(Interview 5, line 31)

James: *"Yeah yeah, I dunno, it's yeah you say sorry and you're back to leaning in class which is the whole point"*

(Interview 5, lines 62 - 63)

Some of the young people said the reason they even attended the meeting in the first place was to go back in to school. They implied that they perhaps did not have the motivation to mend relationships but instead just attended so that they could return:

Daiyan: *"to be honest for me the reason why I just turn up to the meeting is, so I can just come back to the school....not that I really wanna sort it out with the teacher or whatever"*

(Interview 1, lines 79 - 82)

Adnan: *“when I used to do stuff, they would bring me, I literally just said sorry, so I can get back in”*

(Interview 2, line 90)

As Adnan suggests in the above quote the young people, apologising was another aim identified. There was a sense from the interviews that the participants said sorry, whether they meant it or not, so that they could get back to their lessons:

Adnan: *“it's like when you misbehave innit they wanna talk to your parent and then make you say sorry and then get back to lesson”*

(Interview 2, lines 15 - 16)

Additionally, there is a sense that the participants understand that at some point in the meeting there will be an apology made, but they do not, at times, demonstrate a deeper understanding of what that apology is for or the purpose of it:

Nazir: *“I'm not asked why I've done it, but then if I have done it I've done it and I just apologise”*

(Interview 4, lines 63)

James: *“Erm, it's so you can apologise and so can the teacher...”*

(Interview 5, line 36 - 37)

The young people did demonstrate that part of the purpose of a restorative meeting is to be able to move on from the situation that has resulted in the meeting:

Stacey: *“Like when you apologise, you say sorry for what you done, like and then it is all settled, and everyone moves on.”*

(Interview 6, lines 46 - 47)

They also thought the purpose of the meetings was different depending on whether it was with a teacher or another student. Daiyan thought that with another student the purpose of the meeting is to be able to settle things so that you can be in the same school as the other student:

Daiyan: *“if it is with a student obviously erm, they well it will be a different kind of meeting it will be for you to sort it out with that student cos you have to go to the same school...”*

(Interview 1, lines 28 - 29)

4.4 Theme 2: Restorative Meetings Broadly Criticised

Somehow unexpectedly (based on previous findings), the findings from the interviews also suggested that the six participants were also broadly critical of the restorative meeting process. They offered insight in to the different aspects of the meetings and what they felt or thought about them.



Figure 4.4.1 Theme 2: Restorative Meetings Broadly Criticised.

4.4.1 Disempowering Factors

The participants' accounts of the restorative meetings were joined together to form the sub-theme 'disempowering factors.' Their answers imply a sense of 'giving up' during the meetings and even acknowledging that they have little autonomy regarding the whole process of restorative practice.

The participants told me that they felt that if they gave their own, true opinions, that it would just make the process and meeting longer. They told me that if they gave their interpretation of an incident that they would just have to stay in the meeting and instead they would just not disagree with the adults:

Daiyan: *"like can't really argue if a teacher is saying they say, I would say, but trying to say this and that we can't really do that. We are still gonna get sent home and the next day like we come in and it's up to us if we wanna argue back and make the meeting longer just deal with it, get it over and done"*

Researcher: *"so, if you gave your true opinion...."*

Daiyan: *"it's just gonna get longer and they are gonna keep saying this and that happened then just keeps going on and on then its long"*

Researcher: *"yeah, so do you sometimes just sort of in a way just do it to just..."*

Daiyan: *"Give up"*

(Interview 1, lines 191 – 198)

One participant, Adnan, indicated the belief that if he did express his views, the setting would send him home again and that it would only make the situation worse:

Adnan: *"it'll just make it worse like, they'll send you home again and again and again"*

(Interview 2, line 185)

Similarly, Stacey also told me that if she decides not to say sorry during a meeting that she may be sent home again. These beliefs suggest that they do not feel that they have the freedom to express their opinion. They want to be able to get out of the meeting and get back to class or not have to have another restorative meeting:

Stacey: *“Yeah, so like in the meeting it’s like basically, it’s you have to say sorry. If it’s like not then you can’t go back to class or you have to get sent home, and like, it would just make it all start again”*

(Interview 6, 56 - 58)

The participants also demonstrated that they sometimes may adopt an attitude of simply ‘giving up’ during the restorative meetings:

Daiyan: *“at that point I just I just couldn’t be arsed...”*

(Interview 1, line 72)

Additional to the belief that not being honest eases the outcome of the meetings, Adnan also indicated about a time when he felt the adults in the meeting were not telling the truth about what had happened. Despite being quite frustrated about this, even when re-telling me the story, he still did not try to share his version of events, instead he felt quite defeated and decided to not say anything as it would not positively affect the situation anyway:

Adnan: *“I just say sorry, so I can go back innit, I’m not gonna put up a fight or anything. I just wanna get it over and done with, so I just listen, I still feel like why did you lie and that but I’ll just leave it. It’s not gonna change if you say anything.”*

(Interview 2, lines 181 - 183)

Stacey spoke to me about the difference between meetings with other students and ones with teachers or adults. She said that with a teacher she would apologise, as there is an assumption that this would make the meeting easier. Perhaps, like the other participants, that it would make the meeting finish:

Stacey: *“But, with a teacher I just apologise like, cos it is easier”*

(Interview 6, line 50 - 51)

Part of this subtheme is that the participants expressed an opinion that the young person in the meeting has to apologise so that the meeting can end:

Stacey: *“...and it’s like, I just say sorry to stop it”*

(Interview 6, line 54)

It was not only that an apology would make the meetings end in their opinion, but also that they felt that they had no choice but to apologise. They often apologised to the adults, or for their behaviour, when they did not feel like they were the ones who should apologise:

James: *“...and you just have to say sorry or it doesn’t get done, it is like the adult is right anyway”*

(Interview 5, lines 39 - 40)

Stacey: *“...that if you think, like if it is the teacher and still you have to be, you know the one to apologise, and if you don’t then it isn’t over. Like, I yeah, you might still be feeling mad though, but I would just speak to my keyworker after.”*

(Interview 6. Lines 74 - 77)

They talked about apologising, even if they did not genuinely mean it, just so that they could leave the meeting. This perhaps means that they are not developing an understanding of their behaviour and why an apology may be necessary:

James: *"...I dunno, it's sort of like just so you can go and leave the meeting. It don't mean that you are actually sorry"*

(Interview 5, lines 36 - 37)

Adnan: *"they wouldn't let us explain innit they will just say get back in there, say sorry like innit. can't really do anything about being sent home innit. I not allowed, can't say like it wasn't me like, cos they won't believe it"*

(Interview 2, lines 84 - 86)

Daiyan also said that he felt there was no choice as to whether they attended the restorative meetings or not. He expressed that even if he feels like he is the victim in a situation he is treated in the same way as if he was the 'wrong-doer':

Daiyan: *"there was never like, even if I was to be the victim and erm, but somehow the teacher would end up like getting me sent home and then I would just have to come in and again in the morning and then sort it out, even if I still think I didn't really do nothing wrong like I'm the victim and that..."*

(Interview 1, lines 183 - 185)

This creates what the young people could see as a power imbalance within the meetings, where the adults still have the power over the young people. This could feel very disempowering for the young people in these meetings:

Daiyan: *"it is just in general, teachers generally have more power than the students"*

(Interview 1, line 189)

Rafi: *“nah, it’s mostly, the student never gets listened to...the teacher’s power is stronger than the students”*

(Interview 3, lines 104 - 105)

Daiyan told me about how he felt about the power of the adults in the meetings and he explained to me that he thought that the success of the restorative meetings could be reliant on which teachers were in the meeting. He told me about a teacher who he thought had not liked him and therefore tried to jeopardise the meeting:

Daiyan: *“for me it would like depending how she felt towards me, if she felt like oh that she don’t like me then she would try and like try her best to like make it the situation bad or worse for me”*

(Interview 1, lines 115 – 116)

When I explored the part of the meetings where decisions are made about next steps with some of the participants, they felt that they had no part in the decision-making process. Daiyan said that he was under the impression that the decision had already been made prior to the restorative meeting:

Daiyan: *“are you involved in that decision or do you feel like it’s still the adults”*
“well, to be honest we can’t really say anything then, it already been made a decision...”

(Interview 1, line 99)

Rafi was also very clear that he has not been involved in making a joint decision on what the next steps would be after the meeting:

Researcher: *“do you feel like you've made a joint kind of plan, or do you think the teachers...”*

Adnan: *“the teachers”*

Researcher: *“still the teachers, do you ever get to give your opinion on what should happen next or...”*

Adnan: *“no”*

Researcher: *“No, Hmmmm”*

Adnan: *“No.”*

(Interview 2, lines 56 - 62)

Rafi also shared with me that he felt like the meetings had a negative effect on his behaviour throughout the day. He felt that by having to discuss the incident again it affects his mood and he feels angry and frustrated:

Rafi: *“yeah, I understand but it's very frustrating innit, I'm not going to lie to you. it's very frustrating like, it will make me angry throughout the whole day...cos it frustrates me and I feel angry innit, I've already had a meeting today, I feel moody throughout the whole day”*

(Interview 3, lines 30 - 31, 35 - 36)

Stacey also said that the meetings made her feel worse. She said during her interview that she did not want to do the meetings as she felt that bringing up the past is not a helpful process for her:

Stacey: *“.... personally I think they make it worse like me I find talking about a problem once I've got over it myself only makes it worse for me”*

(Interview 6, lines 6 - 7)

Another aspect of feeling disempowered during the meetings, that I will refer to in more detail later, is that the meetings are conducted whether the young person

has done very little in their opinion. Rafi had an interesting insight in to this and compared the disparity in application to a prison sentence. This also suggests that he considers the restorative meetings to be a punishment:

Rafi: *"...but I've done the little, I've done the least. it's like going to prison. yeah, whoever done the least gets the least sentence, they don't all get the same"*

(Interview 3, lines 74 - 76)

4.4.2 Fairness

I have identified fairness as a separate subtheme to disempowering factors, despite them being closely linked. This subtheme is focussed on what the participants said about the relationship between the adults and young people in the meetings, and the balance within the meetings. I link this to how 'fair' the participants perceive the restorative meetings to be.

Daiyan demonstrated that he perhaps felt like the meetings were like a 'fight' or 'battle' with the teacher and that ultimately the teacher always 'wins'. Several of the young people felt that the odds are stacked against them in the restorative meetings:

Daiyan: *"...like teacher will win at the end of the day, can't really argue with that"*

(Interview 1, lines 99 - 100)

Daiyan: *".... I can't really say cos I would never like beat the teacher they would always like, end up winning so there's no point trying..."*

(Interview 1, lines 186 - 187)

This perceived inequality in the meetings leaves the young people involved feeling like the process could be fairer or more even:

James: *"yeah so it is still them who are believed over the yeah, so it always comes down to the adult side being taken and it is, so innit, it's I can say whatever and it is still the adult.... yeah"*

Researcher: *"Ok so you think that even like these meetings don't feel like..."*

James: *"Like they don't feel fair like it isn't that different"*

(Interview 5, Lines 42 - 46)

Stacey: *".... But maybe it could be like more even..."*

(Interview 6, line 69)

Adnan, in particular, expressed a feeling of mistrust in the teachers who attended his meetings in the past. He told me about a meeting where he felt that the teacher exaggerated the incident so that he appeared worse than he was:

Adnan: *"they might start trusting someone else. I've had a meeting yeah and then they would say what's actually happened and they would exaggerate like, they would put more stuff in it"*

(Interview 2, lines 150 - 151)

His opinion was that if an adult did not like him (in his view) then they would not portray events accurately:

Adnan: *“cos like some teachers that don’t like you will exaggerate, or they will change your words or something like that”*

(Interview 2, lines 166 - 16)

He went on to say that during incidents, he has witnessed, that teachers will ask for other teachers to be able to support what they are saying and that those teachers will also attend the restorative meetings. He also told me that sometimes a different adult that was not present at the incident will attend the meeting:

Adnan: *“so, if you swear yeah, you swear three times and then, sometimes they will make it sound like something else and then they’ll go to another teacher and be like did you hear that, did you hear that. and then they’ll get that teacher in the meeting but like, they go to a teacher that they’re close with and like they bring that other teacher to the meeting”*

(Interview 2, lines 156 -159)

Adnan: *“sometimes the teacher that was there, they don’t bring that teacher in, they bring another teacher, that teacher says your lying, but she wasn’t actually there, she just listened to the other one”*

(Interview 2, lines 177 - 179)

Rafi also had similar thoughts on how he feels like teachers exaggerate or twist his words in every meeting he has had. This could add to the feeling that the restorative meetings do not feel fair or like an equal process:

Rafi: *“know what one thing I hate the most the teachers, every meeting you get teachers will twist words up and that , so for example I was play fighting yeah and they were saying, yeah they were fighting they were fully punching on each other, alright we were punching but they will exaggerate on something”*

(Interview 3, lines 48 - 52)

Rafi also felt that it was unfair that the students could be sent home for things that the teachers probably do:

Rafi: *“I don't know if you swear or not, its common, I've seen teachers do it for goodness sake. like can't the students give the teachers a warning. haha and get them sent home if they swore three times”*

(Interview 3, lines 128 - 130)

4.4.3 When the Restorative Meetings Happen

Participants also offered significant reflections on when the restorative meetings happen, in relation to when, how often, why and what they would change about the meetings. The participants expressed the opinion throughout the interviews that they felt that the restorative meetings seemed to happen whether the incident was perceived to be small or big in relation to harm or disruption caused. They had the overall opinion that it was unnecessary that the meetings happened every time there was any sort of incident:

Rafi: *"nah, I think it's unnecessary every single time. it's only the major ones I think there should be meetings but the minor ones a little chat should be alright, little thing"*

(Interview 3, lines 41 - 42)

Daiyan: *"yeah, majority of the time they are small things we get sent home, more times its over small things"*

(Interview 1, line 150)

The participants also thought that for smaller incidents that they should just have a small conversation with the teacher or other person involved, rather than a formal meeting:

Nazir: *"And what do you think could be done differently with those minor things? It could just be dealt with me and the teacher"*

(Interview 4, lines 91 - 93)

They also thought that for some incidents they should receive a sanction more like that in their previous settings, such as detentions or short exclusions, with no follow up meeting. This was only for smaller incidents:

Daiyan: *"yeah like say if it was a small issue just send them home or keep them in or if it gets too much then send them home and then let them come back next day fresh start"*^a

(Interview 1, lines 160 - 161)

When I asked them about how they would change the process for what they perceived as smaller incidents the participants offered their thoughts on this.

Interestingly they thought that their parents should still be informed of the incident and resulting sanction, but that this could be done just as effectively over the phone:

Rafi: *“nah so I think what should be done is if it’s a minor issue then I think a simple little phone call home or something, but not a meeting”*

(Interview 3, lines 55 - 56)

Rafi: *“yeah like swearing, I don’t think you should have a meeting cos swearing and honestly I think like a little phone call home it will sort... not even a phone call home, it’s swearing like, get three warnings yeah just have a little exclusion or something innit or detention”*

(Interview 3, lines 87 - 89)

James: *“I get it, you know, that he needs to know but maybe just be on the phone and then come in for more serious.”*

(Interview 5, lines 84 - 85)

The participants felt that they would be sent home for everything that happens. Similarly, to Rafi, who referred to meetings in terms of a prison sentence, the participants felt that there was no scale as to whether you had to have restorative meeting or not:

Rafi: *“yeah but the thing is if you swear three times you get sent home but then you also get sent home if you actually told the teacher to ‘F’ off”*

(Interview 3, 95 - 96)

James: *“So basically, I think that personally you can be sent home for small things, you know, so like you can get sent home for like swearing or being aggressive with an adult but then, yeah, being stupid with water, it’s like I dunno I don’t make no sense”*

(Interview 5, lines 73 - 75)

This may lead to the participants feel like the meetings happen too often and that they have gotten used to going to the meeting. This implies that the participants may think that the meetings could lose their meaning if they happen all the time, for every incident:

Adnan: *“maybe like cos it’s happened too many times,”*

Researcher: *“hmm hmm”*

Adnan: *“or it’s what they’ve got used to it”*

(Interview 2, lines 72 - 74)

Rafi told me about a time when he intervened with two students and was sent home and then had to have a restorative meeting the next day. He felt that there was some injustice as he was sent home along with the boys who were actually fighting. There was as a sense that he was frustrated that he was sent home even though he had had a smaller role to play in the incident, there was no differentiation.

Rafi: *“sometimes even if I’m in the wrong like if I’m not in the wrong I still have a meeting. so, there’s a couple times I’ve play fought, the second time I was play fighting erm I wasn’t really involved, I’ve stepped in and then I went back out and the other two were still fighting I got sent home, and the other dude did get sent, but I’ve done the little, I’ve done the least”*

(Interview 3, lines 71 - 75)

Rafi also reflected on whether it is right that he could be sent home when he has defended himself, rather than initiated a conflict. As I have highlighted previously as well, he also feels like he cannot then explain the situation as he is sent home regardless:

Rafi: *“I think that is worse cos like you’ve got sent home, if you had a little argument yeah and you get sent home, like imagine it’s not your fault, so imagine you start arguing with me and I argue back and we both get sent home. I’ve defended myself by arguing back, they, I get sent home.”*

(Interview 3, lines 152 - 155)

Rafi also went on to tell me that being sent home when he has simply been defending himself can make him feel angry. He told me that because the situation is not dealt with in the moment and instead the young people involved are sent home straightaway, this can mean that disputes are settled out of school.

Rafi: *“that’s gonna make me more angry so, then as soon as we both get sent out of school there’s a fight happening, and there’s no teachers, I think that’s pointless, it’s stupid”*

Researcher: *“so that’s what happens, that sometimes things are settled out of school but then you come in and you do the meeting”*

Rafi: *“yeah, but it’s all over but you just sit there with bruises all over your face”*

(Interview 3, lines 155 - 159)

The participants also reflected on times when they thought that the use of restorative meetings was appropriate. The focus seems to be on if there is a physical altercation rather than a verbal altercation. They appear to rank physical fights as being ‘big’ enough incidents to warrant a restorative meeting, that involves a parent attending:

Rafi: *“but when it’s a major like for example a real fight or something then that’s when a meeting or something should happen”*

(Interview 3, lines 56 - 57)

Daiyan: *“...if it’s something like a fight or assaulting a teacher then yeah, I would understand if you have to bring my parent in”*

(Interview 1, lines 153 - 155)

Adnan: *“yeah there are some things that happen where they do have to come in like if it was say a fight happened”*

(Interview 2, lines 123 - 124)

Adnan also commented that if the young person involved in incidents keeps repeating the behaviour then there should be a restorative meeting:

Adnan: *“or if it keeps happening and you don’t learn”*

(Interview 2, line 128)

Stacey acknowledged that the meetings do need to happen sometimes as the incident needs to be discussed and that the young person may need to apologise:

Stacey: *“Yeah, I see the point in it, cos it’s like it needs to be maybe talked about so you can learn from it and, you know like you might need to apologise”*

(Interview 6, lines 38 - 39)

4.4.4 Role of The Parent/Carer

An area mentioned in all but one of the interviews was the role of the participants parents in the restorative meetings. The only participant who did not mention parent or carers in their interview is a child in care. The participants shared negative reflections about a parent or carer in relation to restorative meetings. There was a strong sense that this was one of the most important aspects of the restorative meeting that they wanted to discuss with me. The participants referred to a parent attending the meeting as a long process for the parent and that this was an inconvenience for their parent:

Daiyan: *"The thing is I had this meeting one time, and it was literally like a minute or two and my mum had to come, and that what annoyed me cos they could have said that over the phone, they don't need to bring my mum all the way in and do all of that, yeah, it's just long like"*

(Interview 1, lines 139 – 143)

Rafi: *"cos for meetings your parent has to come in and that's all long for them."*

(Interview 3, lines 126 - 127)

They described that it is inconvenient for their parents to have to travel back and forth between home and school, especially if they live further away:

Researcher: *"What do you think he thinks about it?"*

Nazir: *"Urrrh I think that he actually finds it a little it annoying"*

Researcher: *"Hmmmmmm...."*

Nazir: *"Having to come back in and out for a meeting"*

(Interview 4, lines 84 - 87)

Daiyan: *"but there's no need in bringing the parents in when, even like with other students yeah like certain students live like further away and they get sent, like say it was a little issue your parent has to come all the way in for just that one little thing. That's just stupid. So pointless"*

(Interview 1, lines 146 - 148)

They also expressed feelings of frustration that their parents must come in for every meeting. They do not like that they have to come in to the school for incidents that they consider 'stupid' or 'minor':

Adnan: *“yeah yeah, like if you swear three times your mum has to come in, so it’s stupid”*

(Interview 2, line 134)

James: *“.... Yeah I think one thing that is annoying or whatever is that it is like my dad has to come in for the stupidest of things, yeah that’s it”*

(Interview 5, lines 68 - 69)

Nazir: *“one thing I don’t like is how my parents have to come in for minor things”*

(Interview 4, lines 89 - 90)

James also referred to the processes at his previous setting in relation to how he thought his father felt about coming in for meetings. He indicated that the process is different from how it used to be, where the previous setting would just call home and inform his father he was being excluded. There was no expectation for any further actions from his father from the previous setting:

Researcher: *“Why do you think it like annoys your dad?”*

James: *“Cos its different from before innit, when he’d know after it was like I was getting kicked out for you know like when I was gonna be excluded”*

(Interview 5, lines 86 - 88)

Adnan also referred to his previous setting when talking about his reflections on the role of his mother in the process of restorative meetings. Adnan would prefer to be given detentions and exclusions rather than have his mother travel in for

every meeting. He seemed to care that in order to attend the meetings his mother would have to make considerable effort:

Adnan: *"I'd rather do a detention, to be honest, it's like bringing my mum in for no reason innit, I don't want her to come so far"*

Researcher: *"right, so you don't like that your mum has to come in for"*

Adnan: *"yeah, she has to wake up really early, has to bring my little sister, she ain't got time for that"*

(Interview 2, lines 101 - 104)

The way that the participants felt about how inconvenient it is for a parent to travel in for meetings seemed to have some effect on some of their behaviour, or at the very least their intentions of reducing the number of restorative meetings they attend:

Researcher: *"...and what do you think makes you not do that behaviour again, is it the meeting or is it the thought of...?"*

Adnan: *"my mum coming in"*

(Interview 2, lines 135 - 137)

Daiyan: *"the more you bring the parent in the more they understand to stop cos they wouldn't, to be honest I don't want my parent, my mum and that's why. I was getting sent home a lot but then it stopped recently, it stopped for a bit, and I didn't wanna have to bring my mum in"*

(Interview 1, lines 164 - 167)

Daiyan went even further and said that the only reason he attends school at all is because he does not want his mother travelling in to school for meetings.

Daiyan: *“yeah that’s the only reason, the only reason why I really and truly come to school is. And I’ll say it to any teacher is just for that. Not for me now I am only doing it to keep my mum out of travelling and all them things”*

(Interview 1, lines 169 – 171)

Nazir accepted that there are times when it is appropriate for a parent to come in for a restorative meeting, when the incident is more serious. He considers that it is how the process should be.

Researcher: *“Do you think that having a parent there for things that are more serious that’s a good thing?”*

Nazir: *“Yeah of course of course. A lot. It just seems the way it should be”*

(Interview 4, lines 95 - 97)

4.4.5 Some Positive Views

Despite the participants broadly criticising the way in which restorative practice is used in their alternative setting, some of them did also offer some positive reflections on the process. During Daiyan’s interview he told me that he felt like the meetings helped him to not hold a grudge with the adult he has had a conflict with:

Daiyan: *“yeah it does kinda help a bit cos once you like, cos there’s no point holding a grudge if you just sorted it there and then.”*

(Interview 1, lines 91 - 92)

Daiyan shared many things that would imply he found the process unequal during the interview. However, he also reflected that given the choice he would ultimately say that the process of restorative meetings is that of a fair one overall:

Researcher: *“so, do you feel like it is a fair process”*

Daiyan: *“erm sometimes like, sometimes I think yeah but erm but yeah if you give me a choice, I think it is fair”*

(Interview 1, lines 118 - 119)

Nazir was the most complimentary of restorative meetings throughout his interview. He also offered an insight in to why he thought it was a positive experience for him:

Nazir: *“actually I think that it’s actually a good idea that they have the meeting you know after they’ve sent you home”*

(Interview 4, lines 10 - 11)

Nazir: *“Because then when you have that meeting it’s an understanding of what you’ve done wrong”*

(Interview 4, line 13)

Nazir also felt like the adults in the meetings did listen to him. It appears from the analysis of his transcript that he had positive reflections and memories of the process. He also felt like the process helped him be able to move on from incidents and that he could go back to classes with teachers he had had meetings with:

Researcher: *“do you think the adults listen to you?”*

Nazir: *“Yeah they do actually listen”*

(Interview 4, lines 50 - 51)

Researcher: *“So when you go back to the teacher’s classroom do you feel like that line has been drawn”*

Nazir: *“Yeah of course, because we’ve both apologised to each innit”*

(Interview 4, lines 68 - 69)

Stacey also felt that the meetings were useful as they helped her to develop an understanding of an incident. Despite her reflections that the meetings can bring up negative emotions for her and she prefers to be able to deal with things in her own way, she felt that overall the meetings were a positive approach:

Stacey: *“yeah like overall definitely cos they make you understand it and that sort of thing, I like them in that sort of thing”*

(Interview 6, lines 79 - 80)

4.5 Theme 3: Conflicting Views on Alternative Behaviour Interventions

During the interviews I asked the participants about their previous settings, some of the participants shared their views on the behaviour interventions used. None of the previous settings used restorative practice and instead had policies focussed on sanctions, for example detentions and exclusions.

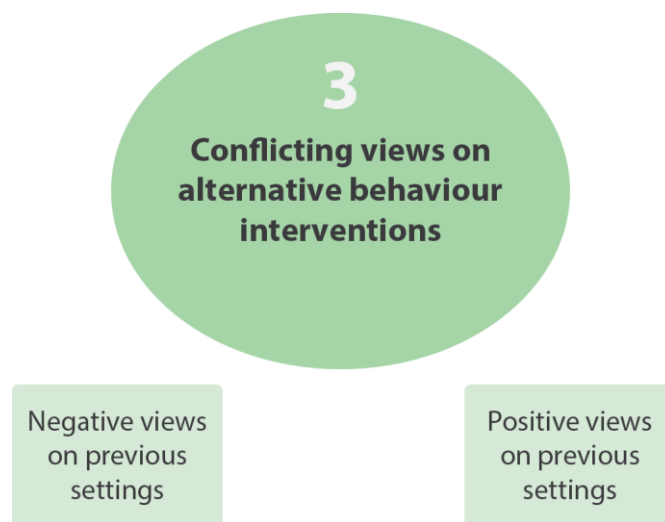


Figure 4.5.1 Theme 3: Conflicting Views on Alternative Behaviour Interventions.

4.5.1 Negative views on previous setting's behaviour policy

Some of the views shared by the participants were negative in nature towards the previous settings behaviour policy. James, in particular, shared his opinion on detentions and exclusions. The chosen quotes below demonstrate that he felt that he was just 'kicked out' without any explanation:

James: *"Yeah at that it was just detentions and getting kicked out and without anything"*

(Interview 5, line 52)

James: *"now it takes longer, and you get sent home every time innit but it means you don't just get kicked"*

(Interview 5, lines 55 - 56)

One participant also indicated that getting detentions made them feel "mad" as they were never given the opportunity to be able to say their own side of the story.

Stacey: *“like it was so like, boom here detention and then I got so mad cos I was like never got to say like what it was you know”*

(Interview 6, lines 83 - 84)

James also expressed the opinion that although he finds the meetings and process somewhat annoying, that, like Stacey being sent home made him feel “mad”. He also told me that being sat at home after an exclusion was ‘stupid’ and that not being in school made no sense to him. This implies that he prefers the behaviour intervention at the alternative provision as it does not involve being at home for days, and instead he returns to school:

James: *“...as much as I think it is a bit annoying and that it is I dunno, I used to get mad getting sent home without being told why and just not being in school doesn’t make sense, I dunno, but yeah like just being sat at home is stupid”*

(Interview 5, lines 58 - 60)

4.5.2 Positive Views on Previous Setting

Despite some negative opinions on their previous settings, most of the participants actually had positive opinions on the use of detentions and exclusions. As outlined in the previous section the participants considered their parents’/carers’ frustrations. They spoke about how in their previous settings, detentions and exclusions meant that their parents/carers did not have to come in for meetings:

Daiyan: *“cos to be honest I didn’t really erm have to come in much with my mum like that.”*

(Interview 1, lines 125 - 126)

Rafi: *“I think detentions are better, cos for meetings your parent has to come in and that’s all long for them”*

(Interview 3, lines 126 - 127)

Daiyan told me about the unit that there was at his previous school. He preferred it there and went on to explain why to me:

Daiyan: *“I prefer in the unit”*

(Interview 1, line 130)

Daiyan appeared to prefer this unit to the alternative provision as he had the freedom to do what he wanted whilst in the unit. This is in comparison to restorative practice in the alternative provision where he comes back in to school and has a meeting the next day after an incident:

Daiyan: *“there was a little unit and I was in there for about 6 weeks and then I came out, well 8, and then I was back in lessons and then they just put me back in there and from there I just stayed in there and did whatever I wanted to”*

(Interview 1, lines 132 - 134)

The participants also implied that they felt a sense of closure after receiving

detentions as they were able to do the detention and then move on quickly, instead of having a meeting the following day:

Researcher: “, you think you'd prefer that clearer, you've got a detention for this”

Adnan: “yeah yeah”

Researcher: “you done your detention and then”

Adnan: “you're done yeah”

(Interview 2, lines 190 - 193)

Stacey: “Well, I dunno cos at least in the last school, I could like just deal with it in my own way, and like get over it”

(Interview 6, lines 86 - 87)

4.6 Summary of Findings

Overall, the participants demonstrated that participants had a good procedural knowledge of the practical steps of the restorative meetings they had attended and how the school applies them in their settings. They knew that they were meetings that were held after there had been an incident and they were returning to the setting. They were, however, unfamiliar with the language used and none of the participants used the term restorative in their interviews.

The participants' understanding of the purpose of the restorative meetings somewhat diverted from what we know the theoretical underpinning of restorative practice is. They lacked a thorough understanding of the purpose and aims of restorative practice. They understood the purpose of meetings was to be able to

go back in to class and not necessarily to develop an understanding of their behaviour and how to avoid similar situations in the future.

The participants were broadly critical of restorative practice and reflected on the process and shared their opinions on their experiences. They expressed views that implied that they were left feeling disempowered by the whole process and that the process was not an equal one. They presented with a sense that they often gave up on the whole process and would just apologise regardless of their role without an understanding of why. They felt they could not openly share their opinions within the meetings as there was a power imbalance within the meetings that made them feel this was not possible. The participants also shared that they were not part of the decision-making process about what the next steps would be, following the restorative meeting. The participants also spoke about a sense of mistrust in the adults in the meetings, that they did not trust that they would tell the truth about the incident.

The participants also spoke about when the restorative meetings happened. There was a dominant opinion that the meetings happened for every incident, whether small or large and that this was unnecessary. They thought that smaller incidents such as swearing should be dealt with by lesser sanctions for example, a detention or a phone call home. Some of the participants also alleged that they felt they were sent home and had to have a meeting even when they were not to blame for an incident or when they were defending themselves.

Another view of the participants was that they cared about their parents travelling in to attend the meetings. They did not like that a parent had to come in for every meeting that they had. This even had a positive effect on some of the participants as they tried not to be involved in incidents to avoid a parent having to travel in.

The participants shared their views on their previous setting and what the behaviour policy was there. Some participants preferred the process at their previous setting as it meant they could have that consequence and then be able to move on quickly from the incident. However, they did recognise overall that the restorative meetings did offer them an opportunity to share their views and was at least more even than simply receiving detentions or exclusions.

Chapter 5 | Discussion

5.1 Overview of Chapter

In this chapter I will discuss the themes presented in the previous chapter in more detail, relating it back to existing literature and relevant psychological theory. I will then outline any strengths and limitations of this research. Next, I will explore implications for future research and educational psychology practice. I will then end by reflecting on the process of conducting this research.

5.2 Theme One: Knowledge of Restorative Meetings

This theme focuses on the young people's knowledge of restorative meetings. The subthemes focus on their views of the purpose of the meeting, their knowledge of the sequences of events that led to a meeting, events during the meeting and what happens after the meeting, and who attends the meetings. The findings showed that the young people I interviewed had good sequential knowledge of the meetings. They could accurately recall when the restorative meetings are conducted, who attends and what happens afterwards. Their understanding of the purpose diverged from the principles of restorative approaches. They did not show a deeper understanding of the purpose and saw it as a 'means to an end' and not necessarily a learning experience.

The young people that I interviewed may lack the understanding of the complex relationships and concepts with restorative practices, namely the ethical and moral underpinnings of restorative practices. Kohlberg's (1980) theory of moral development describes that adolescents are developing good interpersonal relationships and about how and why there are certain rules and how these can

be upheld. Crucially, they must learn that there are alternate views and that they can interpret these. It may be that due to a variety of reasons young people in alternative provisions have not been given ample opportunities to develop these skills. They may have a fairly simplistic understanding of punishment and morals, which is perhaps reflected in their ability to recall the steps of the restorative meetings, but not the purpose of the meetings.

During the interviews I noticed that, especially towards the beginning, the young people required some scaffolding and prompting to understand what the interview was about. They did not recall that the meetings were called restorative meetings and they did not seem familiar with the language surrounding these meetings. It is worth considering that the young people I interviewed may have had undiagnosed language needs, given the wealth of evidence that young people in alternative provisions have language needs. There is evidence of undiagnosed language needs in young people with behavioural issues or diagnosed behaviour disorders and evidence that these language difficulties have contributed to the development of the behaviour disorder (Cross, 2004; Stringer & Clegg, 2006). Ripley and Yuill (2005) assessed the receptive and expressive language abilities of boys who had been permanently excluded from school. They found that skills in expressive language were most impaired and that they struggled to express a deeper understanding of situations, especially under stress. Given the link between language needs and behaviour issues in educational settings, it is unsurprising that there is increasing evidence that young people in the youth justice system are highly likely to have undiagnosed language needs (Bryan et al., 2007; LaVigne & Van Rybroek, 2013, 2011; Purvis et al., 2014; P. C. Snow & Powell, 2011).

Snow and Powell (2008) reported that over 50% of male young offenders in an Australian sample scored significantly lower than a control sample in measures of abstract language and narrative language. If these young people have poor narrative language skills and low expressive vocabulary they could present with non-specific, poorly structured and monosyllabic responses accompanied by poor non-verbal skills. As a further consequence of this they may present in the meetings as lacking remorse, being rude and having poor motivation to engage (P. C. Snow & Sanger, 2015). This may mean that by doing these restorative meetings, without differentiation or pre-teaching, or being aware of the young people's language skills, as professionals we are setting these young people up to fail. Restorative approaches require participants to affectively engage in conversations that focus on their own wrongdoing. This means it relies heavily on the language abilities of all involved. Wrong-doers are expected to listen and respond to rather complex and often emotionally charged accounts from the victim's perspective. They are then required to express their own ideas in a narrative that is received as being adequate by the victim (Hayes & Snow, 2013). It is also worth considering that not only do they have to process a lot of complex language, but they also have to do this under the context of elevated stress levels. Stressful situations in themselves can cause difficulties in successful communication (Maruna & Mann, 2006).

Careful consideration of the young people's developmental age and any language needs they have is required to ensure that the restorative meetings are meaningful and that they learn from these interactions. When using restorative practice settings also need to carefully consider whether conducting meetings with the young people is appropriate and whether they have done enough to help the young person understand the purpose of the restorative meeting.

5.3 Theme Two: Restorative Meetings Broadly Criticised

The second theme refers to the young people sharing views of the process of restorative meetings that were mainly critical. The previous research that involved gathering young people's views found that the views were more positive than the views shared in this research. This may be because all the interviews I conducted were carried out within two weeks of the participant's last restorative meeting and such the participants may have had less time to reflect positively on the experience. All the participants had also had several of these meetings and may have been reflecting views of the school behaviour policy as a whole, rather than a specific meeting. In the section below I will explore some of the psychological theories and approaches that are relevant to the findings and what they may mean in relation to restorative approaches.

5.3.1 Disempowering Factors

The six young people expressed views and opinions that suggested that the restorative meetings left them feeling disempowered by the whole process. They expressed views that suggested there was still a power imbalance in the restorative meetings between the adult and the young person. French, Raven, & Cartwright (1959) describe power as the potential to exert influence over another person or group of people. Within restorative practices every effort should be made to ensure that there is a balance of power and that the participants feel that some parties are not exerting undue influence in the process. The adults in these meetings naturally have power, due to age and status. There needs to be effort made to reduce this inequality in restorative meetings so that the young people can feel empowered to engage in the process more meaningfully.

The participants also talked about a sense of giving up during the meetings, and that they felt like whether they shared their perception of the truth they would not be believed. They typically expressed the belief that sharing their opinion would not change the situation. The young people may have experienced this feeling of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1972) throughout their education, and have now lost the motivation to take any action. If young people have learnt that when they have interactions with adults that they are not listened to, and that they cannot change outcomes they may stop attempting to influence any outcomes. It is important that the adults who are working restoratively apply practice to try and stop this cycle of learned helplessness.

The young people also spoke about how the restorative meetings can make them feel negative emotions, and that these can last throughout the day. They shared that it can make them feel angry, annoyed and starts the day off negatively by bringing back the incident. Rowe & Fitness (2018) found that experiencing negative emotions such as anger and anxiety can inhibit learning. This could mean that they struggle to learn from the restorative meeting itself and if the feelings persist it may inhibit learning throughout the day. Negative feelings can also affect skills needed for successful restorative meetings by hindering communication, preventing engagement and reducing motivation. Effects throughout the day can include impaired cognition and diminished productivity. This shows that the restorative meetings must ultimately be a positive experience for the perceived wrongdoer as well as the person harmed. By not empowering the participants the negative feelings they experience could lead to negative effects throughout the day, and even a repeat of the incident that resulted in the meeting in the first place. This does not negate the need of addressing negative

feelings and reactions, but the meetings must act as a way to resolve the negative emotions.

The young people talked about how they did not feel they could share their version of events in the restorative meetings, and they needed scaffolding and encouragement to share their experiences with me in the study interview. Humans can be proactive and engaged in any given process or can behave and feel passive or alienated, depending on the conditions in which they have developed. Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) explains that these differences can be due to the amount of self-motivation someone has.

People can be motivated by external factors such as reward systems, evaluations, or the opinions they fear others might have of them. Yet people are also motivated from within, by their own interests, curiosity, care or values. These intrinsic motivations are often not externally rewarded, but they can sustain motivation for actions. Self-determination theory proposes that social and cultural factors can facilitate or undermine an individual's sense of initiative and motivation. Conditions that support an individual's experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are argued to result in the highest levels of motivation and engagement for activities. If these three psychological needs are not supported, it could result in a negative impact on self-motivation. Experiences may also mean that individuals develop thoughts and values that motivate them that may cause them to behave in inappropriate ways. One of the participants shared that they did not settle the disagreement within the meeting, and instead told me that conflict could be settled outside of the restorative meetings. This may mean that they are developing a meaningful resolution to conflict that is not appropriate, perhaps motivated by maintaining status within their peer group or community. In order to achieve self-determination, young people need to have

meaningful experiences that develop their intrinsic motivations, and that these are appropriate.

The 2014 Code of Practice makes it clear that children and young people must be made central to any decisions made about their education and interventions regarding their education. This can be achieved by enabling and encouraging their participation in meetings. Sociologist Robert Hart (1997) designed the “Ladder of Youth Participation” which is a model that describes 8 levels of how young people can be involved in ‘projects’ and can be applied to all sorts of contexts (Figure 5.3.1). The participants shared views that may suggest they themselves feel like their participation is tokenistic. They express an understanding of the process which suggests they do not have any choice whether they attend or not (if not they get sent home again). They are given a voice, a chance to participate, but they feel this has little effect. As adolescents this could make them feel incredibly disempowered by the restorative meeting process, as on the surface it appears participatory but in reality, it is not. The participants also said that they have to say sorry so that they can return to lessons, whether they feel they mean it or not. This again suggests that they are ‘involved’ in the meetings, but not the decisions that are made in the restorative meetings. this is in direct conflict with the principles of restorative practice.

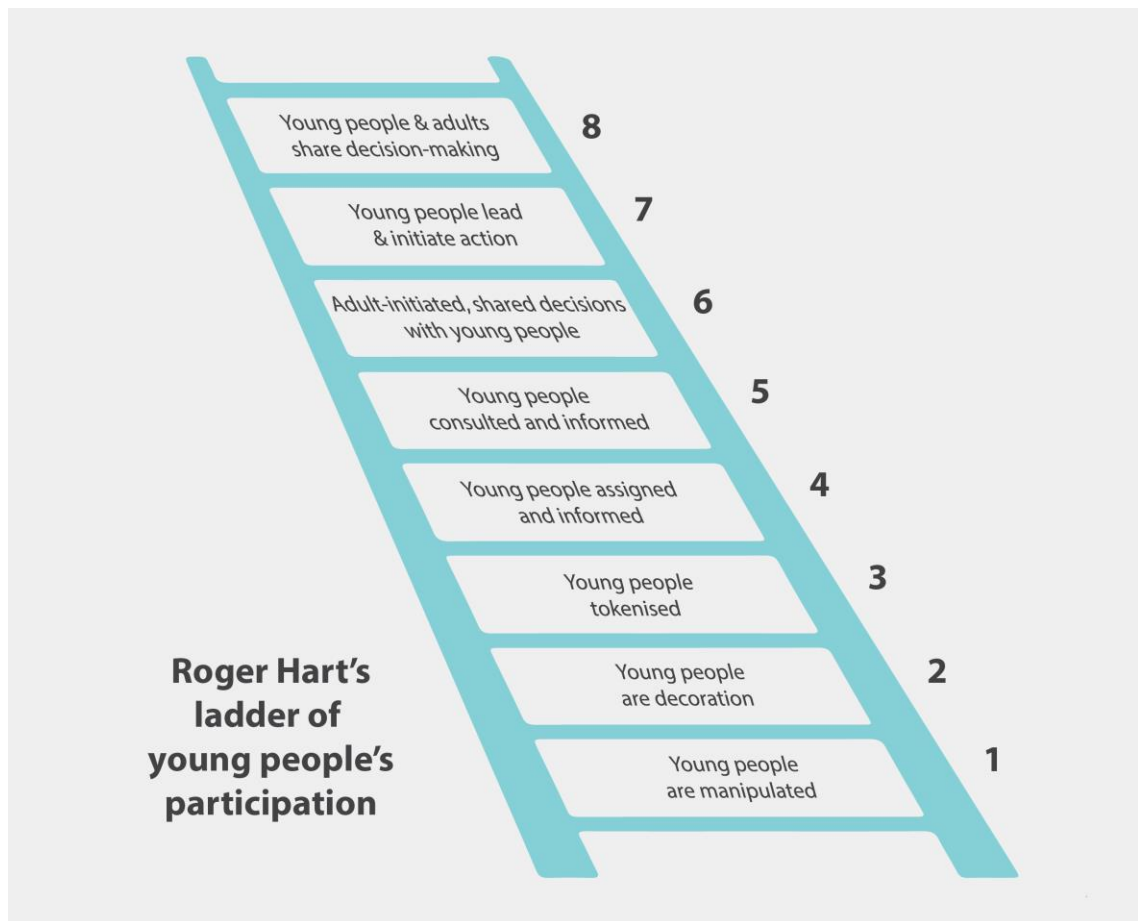


Figure 5.3.1 Ladder of Young People's Participation.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1997). *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*.

5.3.2 Fairness

The young people's responses suggest that they did not regard the meetings to be fair and equal. This sense that the meetings are unfair could be due to the fact they expressed that they did not trust the adults in the meeting. Trust refers to whether an individual believes that another person's motivations are benevolent towards them and therefore will be positively responding to their needs. Trust is fundamental to building reciprocal relationships and if a young person has not developed trust with adults this would be detrimental to their relationships. Building and repairing relationships is such an integral part of restorative practice

that if the young people do not feel this is happening, they will see the process as against them. If they feel the relationship lacks trust they will not allow themselves to commit or invest in that relationship (Simpson, 2007). We develop trust in those that we see as knowledgeable, similar to ourselves and most importantly those who we perceive as honest and transparent (Eiser & White, 2005). The participants explicitly said that, according to them, the adults in the restorative meetings were not honest and would fabricate information, or find another adult that could support them.

5.3.3 When Restorative Meetings Happen

This subtheme describes the participants views on when the restorative meetings are conducted. The young people's perception was that the meetings happen too often and for incidents that were both minor and more serious. Their responses indicated that they thought that the meetings needed to be applied with a more graduated response. It is outlined in the SEND Code of Practice that sanctions for behaviour are applied in a graduated manner.

Fixed consequences for every type of behaviour based on a series of fixed sanctions (exclusion then restorative meeting) are based on the behaviourist theories of Skinner and Pavlov. The way in which the restorative meetings are applied in the alternative provision is almost done in a 'zero-tolerance' manner where little attention is paid to the individual needs of the young person involved or the severity of the incident. Consequences for behaviour, whether the behaviour is perceived as positive or negative, should be applied in a graduated way. A graduated response would enable the young people to develop an internalised set of behavioural and moral norms (Kohn, 2006). If they are done so often and applied in a way that seems unfair to young people, they may feel

that that the whole process is meaningless and become disengaged in the process.

Government guidance for schools indicates that sanctions should also be proportionate to the behaviour that has occurred and that they should be fair (Department for Education, 2016). Some of the participants' views reflected that they felt that the meetings occurred indiscriminately and at times unjustly. Tabibnia & Lieberman (2007) found that feeling like you have been treated unfairly activated areas in the brain relating to reactions to disgust and contempt. They found that these results persisted even when the task remained constant and did not become more unfair. This suggests that there could be longer term effects of being perceived to be treated unfairly and that the restorative meeting may confound these reactions. If they are feeling as if the situation is unfair, and that they should not be in the meeting they may become more 'disgusted' by the injustice and not be open to engaging meaningfully in the process, and therefore not learn anything from the process.

The participants seemed to have a strong sense of social justice, in relation to their opinion that restorative meetings should be applied to an individual's behaviour equally and fairly. One participant even compared them to a prison sentence and said that individuals do not get as long as each other for different roles in a crime. This is an interesting comparison as it not only tells me that they see the meetings as a punishment, but that they also see them as applied unfairly. There is certainly a link to be made between social justice and restorative practices. Winslade (2018) outlined features that are present in both, including that their philosophy is to include rather than exclude and that both attempt to analyse the ecological factors that affect someone's chances of success (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

5.3.4 Role of Parent/Carer

The participants shared that they did not appreciate that a parent had to attend the restorative meetings every time that they had to have one. It was clear that there was a strong attachment to that parent and that they felt strongly about them being inconvenienced for something that they had done. One boy in particular did not want his mother to have to travel in to the school early as she had his younger sibling to look after. When the participants talked about their parents, it was probably the most visibly frustrated they appeared during the interviews. It was clearly something they felt strongly about.

They often said that a parent should not have to come in for small incidents, but that they accepted that they should be there for more serious incidents, such as physical aggression. They also accepted that parents needed to be informed when there was an incident, regardless of how serious it was. Miller, Ferguson, & Simpson (1998) pointed out that students regard information that is sent home, pertaining to unsatisfactory behaviour to be the most effective punishments a school can utilise. It is also important to consider that having a parent at a restorative meeting would not be the norm in a criminal justice setting, where this modern interpretation of restorative practice originated. Parent-child relationships can be incredibly complex and introducing a new variable like this must be carefully considered.

5.3.5 Some Positive Views

The participants also shared some positive views of their experience of restorative meetings. Some of the positive reflections on restorative meetings came from the meetings providing a sense of closure and giving them the ability to move forward. The social psychologist Arie Kruglanski coined the phrase “need

for closure” (1997), referring to a framework that aims to find an answer that will alleviate ambiguity and confusion after something has ended. The young people’s need for closure may exist on a scale, with some wanting to seek it out more than others. If restorative practice principles are adhered to, all the attendees should feel some sense of closure.

Their sense of closure may come from the fact they expressed that they like that restorative meetings provided them with a space to talk and be listened. This is especially in comparison to exclusions and detentions which did not provide them with even the opportunity to speak. Feeling like you have been listened has many psychological benefits, including that it can result feeling like you have been taken seriously and that your feelings and opinions matter. Feeling listened to and understood can help to improve emotional and physical well-being and relieve tension and stress. Ensuring that restorative meetings finish with a sense of closure and that all the attendees have been understood could result in overall positive feelings and reflections on the process.

5.4 Theme Three: Conflicting Views on Alternative Behaviour Interventions

5.4.1 Interventions

The third theme outlines the difference between the participants views on their previous mainstream setting and the current alternative provision they were attending. Some of the young people interviewed shared that they preferred their previous setting where they were given exclusions and detentions and felt they were then able to move on from the conflict. However, some also shared that they thought that exclusions were ‘stupid’ as they were just sat at home and not in school.

They showed a willingness to want to be in school and learn. Despite being critical of restorative meetings throughout the interviews, they also reflected positively on the restorative approaches when compared to more zero-tolerance approaches in their previous settings. They felt frustrated that when they have been simply excluded in the past they have not been given a chance to tell their story. Meichenbaum (2006) highlighted the importance for an individual to be able to tell their own story to reduce the effects of trauma. I think that that the restorative meetings could be causing the young people involved to be revisiting a previous trauma (fight, conflict, injustice). It can be incredibly useful to revisit trauma, but only if this is handled correctly. If an individual feels that they have not been given the opportunity to tell their story or if he/she is not ready to tell their story, this can have an effect on their mental health and wellbeing. It could result in feelings of rejection and the meetings could retraumatise the young person and enable them to enter in to a cycle of repeated feelings of failure. These are difficult meetings and I can understand why they feel like they are difficult topics to talk about especially if, as discussed earlier, they do not trust the adults involved. Avoiding these meetings could seem like an easier and less intimidating option, and detentions and exclusions offer little pressure in terms of expectations to discuss the issues. These meetings, if done following the pillars and principles of restorative practices could offer an opportunity for psychological growth (Butler et al., 2005). A more graduated response may alleviate the pressure on these meetings, where they are offered opportunities for 'restorative chats' and less formal meetings (no parent) and then with parents and with the opportunity for therapeutic intervention regarding trauma.

5.5 Links to Previous Research

In Chapter 2 I outlined the findings from a literature search. In regard to the views and perspectives of young people the findings from previous research was less critical of the restorative approach. In this section I will make links to some of the previous research and offer some explanation as to why I found different results.

The previous research highlighted that young people find being treated equally and fairly in restorative meetings to be important for feeling satisfaction and having more positive reflections. Skinns and Hough (2009) found that the participants in their review of 4 Bristol schools said the adults treated them “more like humans”. Similarly, McCluskey et al (2009) found that the young people across the 18 schools valued being listened to and valued having a fair hearing within the meetings. The young people in my research did not feel like they were given an equal voice. Perhaps if they had felt the process was a fair one, they would reflect more positively on the whole experience. One of the participants, who was the most positive, did share that he found the process fair and equal.

I also found that the young people felt like the adults had the most power in the restorative meetings. Skinns and Hough (2009) found that the young people in their research were positive overall about restorative practice, but that they still thought that the approach was still weighted against those perceived to be in the wrong. It is also interesting that they found that staff who did not feel comfortable with relinquishing this power were not involved in restorative meetings in the schools they reviewed. This could be why they found more positive results as the adults in meeting were open to the process being equal. It may be that in other previous research the staff members take a more naturally restorative and equal approach to the young people they work with.

The feeling of trusting the other people and the process was an important issue for the young people in my research. Stinchcomb et al (2006) evaluated two schools and found that one of the reasons the approach was not as successful in one of the schools was that the staff did not trust the restorative process. This is interesting as it may be that trust plays a big role in whether restorative practices are considered in a positive manner, whether that be from the adults or the young person.

It must also be acknowledged that none of the previous research was carried out in an alternative provision for young people who have been excluded from mainstream school. Gillard (2015) did include some young people engaged with a youth offending team but did not make it clear what findings were generated from that particular group. The potential differences of young people excluded from school in an alternative provision could account for the differences in findings. Factors to be considered are trauma, lack of trust in adults, language skills and social and emotional needs. I will discuss these in more detail later in this chapter.

Like my findings, previous research has also found the young people involved in restorative approaches think that there should be a graduated response to consequences. In McCluskey et al's (2008) review of 18 schools in Scotland they found that the young people appreciated a graduated response to exclusions and other sanctions. Skinns et al also found that their participants also had an understanding that some incidents (physical aggression) should warrant a more serious sanction. Young people in the previous research, and my research, do have a sense that some behaviour should be treated differently to other behaviour incidents. The adults in the previous research findings also said that they valued

having the freedom to still be able to use more traditional sanctions within school, whilst also acknowledging the value of restorative practice.

Bevington (2015) acknowledged that his findings from appreciative enquiry suggest that the use of restorative practice is not always appropriate. This supports the views of the young people I interviewed that felt that the meetings were happening far too often, for what they considered minor incidents. For restorative approaches to work all stakeholders need to be fully engaged and supportive. This may not be the case if they feel the use of it is not appropriate in any given situation.

5.6 Strengths and Limitations of the research

In this section I will discuss the strengths and limitations of this research, in relation to the recruitment of participants, the sample itself and the methodological choices including the use of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. I will use extracts from my own reflective diary to demonstrate my reflexivity and reflections during the research process.

5.6.1 Recruitment and Participants

A strength of this research is that it is the first qualitative study of young people's views on restorative practice to be conducted within an alternative provision in the UK. This means that it could provide insight in to how young people in similar provisions experience restorative meetings. However, conducting research in an alternative provision presented several issues regarding recruitment and then with the sample itself.

The recruitment of participants proved to be somewhat difficult and at one point there were major concerns that the research would not happen. I had been to the setting and had already completed two interviews when I attempted to arrange my second visit. I was told that it was not going to be possible to come and do any more interviews as the setting was on 'high-alert' due to the number of knife crime in the local area and the involvement of several of their students.

"I am really worried about not being able to go to the setting this term and collect my data. There have been 5 stabbings this week and the school are worried about upsetting the balance and I am one too many new adults to be around the students. I will chat to supervisor tomorrow and see what to do."

Reflective diary entry, 21st June 2018

"I have contacted the setting and have negotiated if I can possibly visit one more time in order to get some more interviews completed and they have said yes! Hopefully I can get another 4-6 interviews done."

Reflective diary entry, 27th June 2018

For the days allocated for the interviews and attending the alternative provision, I was given a room to be able to conduct the interviews and the staff would bring me students whose parents had not opted them out of the research, and who had been involved in a recent restorative meeting. On reflection I believe that I should have had more involvement in this part of the recruitment as the adults may have been selecting those participants who were more likely to want to take part, or even being told that they had to take part in the research.

A further difficulty of conducting research with this target group is that they appeared to be distrustful of adults and were reluctant to speak to me at all. Several potential participants declined to take part in the research once I told

them that I was going to be recording the interview. They seemed to be hyper-vigilant and distrustful that I was going to use the recording against them in some way.

“I had 3 boys decline to be interviewed today. Two of them said they didn’t want their thing recorded as I could use it against them. The other one asked if I was from the ‘5-0’ (police). I had another one that did not want to do it, but he came back after his friend said it was OK. He was my sixth and final interview!”

Reflective diary entry, 5th July 2018

Although I saw the digital recorder as a necessity in the data collection process, I think it contributed to not being able to recruit more participants and on reflection, I wonder whether I should have offered to just hand write the participants’ accounts. Building trust and rapport with young people, particularly those who may have difficult relationships with adults previously, would be essential for future research.

5.6.2 Interviews

In this research I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants. This methodology requires the interviewer to have an active role in what is discussed. I was able to change the direction of the interview in order to gather the most interesting and relevant data possible. Although this style of interviewing could be argued to produce richer discussions, the lack of standardisation inevitably impacts on the confirmability of the results. The process was inevitably vulnerable to influence from my own motivations, values and views. I attempted to overcome these risks by remaining reflexive throughout the data collection process. I also made sure to utilise both academic and professional supervision and check my transcripts and discussed my interviews. I also kept a detailed research journal

to explore and acknowledge an awareness of personal views and prejudices and how they might impact on the interviewing technique.

“I have done a few interviews already and I do have some feelings of frustration that so far the participants do not seem to be thinking highly of the process. I need to try and not let a feeling of negativity I am developing come through in the remaining interviews and keep an open mind”.

Reflective diary entry, 10th July 2018

The interviews were conducted between 2 days to two weeks after a restorative meeting had taken place. I was in fact informed by the setting manager that the young people had been involved in several restorative meetings prior to the interviews. This could be considered as a strength of this research as hopefully it meant the participants had a better chance of remembering the meetings more accurately and have knowledge of the process. Due to this, I did not ask many specific questions about a particular meeting that had occurred, and the interviews were about their views of the meetings in general.

A limitation of gathering data through interviews alone is that one interview can only represent a snapshot of a participant's view or perspective at that moment in time. It may be that if the interview had been conducted on a different day the data collected could have been somewhat different. For example, if the participant had only had a restorative meeting few days earlier, they may have still been feeling more negatively about the process, without some time to reflect or time to feel less frustrated.

Initially my aim was to conduct semi-structured interviews that had more open questioning than I ultimately did. However, during some of the interviews I found that the participants needed more scaffolding to answer questions. I also found I needed to use more simple and closed questions towards the beginning of the

interviews to encourage them to share their views with me. This may be due to the young people being concerned about sharing their views with me and needing some time to build a level of trust and rapport with me. I also discussed earlier in this chapter about the language demand of restorative meetings and that there is a chance that the majority of the young people in the alternative provision had varying degrees of speech and language needs. This may have resulted in some of the interviews providing data that was not perhaps as rich as other interviews. Furthermore, another general limitation of interviewing young people is that at times they are less reflective than adult participants. Some participants found it difficult to be asked about their feelings regarding restorative meetings and perhaps lacked the emotional literacy and cognitive development to provide an answer. It may also be relevant to consider that young people are given fewer opportunities to express their opinions or feelings freely within the school context, especially those who may have had a difficult time at previous mainstream settings. Whilst at school, young people are expected to follow rules and could face punishment if they express a 'negative' feeling about another person or event (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). However, I found that the young people I interviewed were more able to express negative views and did not appear to feel any caution about expressing these views.

5.6.3 Evaluation of Thematic Analysis

Through the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), it was possible to analyse the range of data collected during the interviews. However, thematic analysis only provides information regarding the experiences of the participants based on the words that they have said. Data such as tone of voice, hesitation and body language are lost in thematic analysis as this is not included in the development of themes. This would have added to the richness of the data,

especially given the possible language needs and reluctance to speak in the first few minutes of the interview as the participants nodded, fidgeted and used facial expressions. It was not deemed appropriate for this research as I wished to gather an overview of the experiences of young people at an alternative provision, the first research of its kind.

I was aware of a further criticism of thematic analysis, namely that an element of the researcher will always appear in the data and influence the results, even when completed using inductive methods. Again, through the maintenance of a reflective diary, I attempted to reduce the impact that this had on the data. I also checked my development of the themes with my academic supervisor to make sure that my own motivations and views were not influencing the interpretation of the data. I made sure that I followed the six phases of the process of thematic analysis by checking the stages and recording my actions at each stage. I also checked with the research interest group at my placement as they had previous experience of conducting qualitative research.

“I think I need to check how I am going to go from coding in step 2 to developing my themes in step 3. I feel like I have missed out a stage, but I cannot see where I have done this.”

Reflective diary entry, 18th January 2019

“I brought up my confusion today at the research interest group at work. It was really helpful and after checking how I was doing the coding part I learnt that I had skipped the actual coding part and was trying to think of themes. I started again and I am now actually coding rather than searching for themes. It is making a lot more sense.”

Reflective diary entry, 21st January 2019

Braun and Clarke (2006) claimed that conducting a thematic analysis does not require technological or theoretical knowledge of other qualitative approaches. This means that thematic analysis is ideal for researchers, like myself, who have not previously conducted large pieces of research. Another advantage of thematic analysis is that it does not have many prescriptions and procedures, therefore allowing the researcher to use their own intuition and skills in order to develop themes. However, this flexibility could potentially lead to inconsistencies and a lack of coherence in the data analysis. This can be mitigated by being transparent and clear through reflexivity and reflections.

5.6.4 Reflexivity

This research was influenced by my own interest in finding alternative approaches to a 'zero-tolerance' approach to behaviour in schools. I also think that listening to young people regarding behaviour interventions is paramount to the success of any given intervention. I feel passionate about reducing the number of young people that are excluded from school, and subsequently engaging in criminal behaviour. I am aware of my own political and ethical positions in relation to exclusions and alternative provisions and I must acknowledge that this may have influenced how I approached this research, not only how I conducted the interviews but also how I interpreted the data. As I have demonstrated I kept a reflective diary to record and acknowledge times that I became aware of my own biases and how I thought these could impact the data. I have provided an extract below of my reflective diary to illustrate a time that I had to reflect on my own biases. It highlights a time when I was questioning whether my interpretations were due to frustration at the adults involved in the process or true representation of what the participants were saying.

“It is becoming clear to me that the way in which the setting is doing their restorative meetings is not in line with the principles of restorative justice, they don’t seem to have a choice whether they attend or not. It is frustrating as I think that these kids at the PRU deserve to be given a chance to learn from things that are happening, but they are not, it might be another system failing them. What is the point if it only looks like it works on the surface? I need to make sure I am processing my frustrations, so that I do not let them affect how I interpret the data. I think I will take a couple of weeks away from it before transcribing and coding.”

Reflective diary entry, 10th July 2018

In order to attempt to achieve trustworthiness in this research I also had regular supervisions with my director of studies, met with fellow trainees and spoke with educational psychologists to discuss my potential biases. I have also included examples of annotated transcripts (see Appendix 10) so that I can be as transparent as possible as to how I developed the themes.

5.7 Implications

In this section I will consider the implications of the findings of this research project. Despite the findings of this research not being able to be generalised due to the methodology and sample size, they do provide an in-depth understanding of a real-life context. This insight can provide information on patterns that may be able to be applied to other educational settings. This section will explore the impact of my findings for the research setting itself, restorative practice evidence base and educational psychologists.

5.7.1 Implications Within Research Setting and Wider Practice

The research was conducted in a secondary alternative provision in an inner London borough where I was on placement. I hope that my findings will provide the provision with an insight in to how the young people are experiencing the restorative meetings. I plan to present my findings to the setting in a summary sheet.

Theme one should provide the setting with insight in to how much the young people understand about the process of restorative meetings. The young people had good sequential knowledge of the meetings but lacked a deeper understanding of the purpose. This may be because the young people who attend alternative provisions may have diagnosed or undiagnosed language needs. They may be struggling to form a deeper understanding during the meetings as they lack the skills to grasp the concepts. This means that it would be beneficial for the provision to provide more details on the meaning and purpose of restorative meetings to the young people. It is also important, as the previous research shows, that the setting adopt restorative practice as a whole school approach. In order to familiarise staff and students with the purpose and language associated with restorative practice it should be across the whole curriculum and in every classroom.

Theme two offers insight in to the how the young people in the setting experience restorative meetings. In particular, the theme focusses on how young people feel about the adults and their interpretation of whether the meetings are conducted fairly. The setting may benefit from being more transparent about the process, why the meetings occur and what role the adults play in the meeting. The young people also thought that the meetings occurred too often and were applied to all incidents. It would be of benefit for the setting to consider using a staggered

approach to meetings, which may include times when a 'restorative chat' is appropriate and times when parents are not required to attend. The young people did recognise that the meetings were appropriate at times, and appreciated them. The setting could speak to the young people attending the settings and ask them further questions about when they think restorative meetings are appropriate. This would increase transparency in the process, and perhaps trust between the adults and young people.

Theme three showed that the participants preferred the closure of receiving exclusions and detentions in their previous setting. However, they also liked being able to be given the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts. This is something that does not necessarily happen in mainstream settings that apply a more 'zero-tolerance' approach to behaviour interventions. This has potential for positive results from applying restorative practice, if the setting is able to provide closure from the meetings then the participants may begin to reflect more positively.

Although the findings of the current research cannot be generalised, they still provide an insight in to how some young people experience restorative meetings. They could be used to guide considerations that other settings and practitioners make when choosing to use restorative approaches. For example, it could be beneficial to create a developmental psychological profile of young people who attend alternative provisions, based on their language skills and social emotional and mental health needs. This could then guide practitioners in how to differentiate the restorative meetings to meet the needs of all the attendees.

The previous research I identified in the literature review suggest a number of factors that can help to ensure that restorative practice is successful in educational settings. It identified that when restorative practice and language is

embedded throughout a setting the practice has the most impact. It also appears that it is important that all staff are committed to the principles and that the young people have an understanding of the process. This current setting would benefit from refreshing their training and knowledge of the underlying principles of restorative practice. They should also consider applying restorative practices across the setting so that all individuals have a good knowledge of the approach.

5.7.2 Implications for Future Research

The rationale for the current study was based on the gaps in the restorative practice evidence base, particularly the lack of evidence exploring the views of young people in alternative provisions. Further research with this population is needed to explore their views in more detail and with larger sample numbers. It could also prove relevant to triangulate information from the adults in the meetings to compare the young people's perceptions and the adults; or, to compare meetings conducted with this population through alternative provision settings and behaviour teams that conduct restorative meetings. The meetings currently involve familiar adults that are members of the senior leadership team. These may be adults who the young people have had previous conflict with or feel distrustful towards. It may prove beneficial to have an adult from outside the system to facilitate the restorative meetings. This could increase the sense of fairness and potentially satisfaction with the process.

An interesting finding in this research is that the young people assigned great importance to the role of their parent/carer in the meeting. Although they did not speak of the role a parent/carer played within the meeting they seemed concerned about them being required to attend every meeting, especially for smaller incidents. It would therefore be interesting for future research to explore this relationship between the young person, the parent/carer and the process.

Parents/carers attendance at the restorative meetings would not necessarily occur in a criminal justice setting and therefore more research on the effect of their presence in this process is required in order to conduct effective and successful restorative meetings.

5.7.3 Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

The findings from this research indicate several implications for the profession of educational psychology. The research highlights the importance of gathering and listening to the views of young people to gain insight in to the efficacy of an intervention. The findings show that an intervention may appear to be ‘working’ and is continued to be utilised when in fact the young people feel dissatisfaction with the process. It is also important for educational psychologists to reflect that just because a young person may be saying and doing what is expected of them during a behaviour intervention that they may not be fully engaged or understand the process.

The findings also suggest that facilitators in the restorative meetings would benefit from a knowledge of the development of moral and ethical stages and how these may affect the success of meetings. Educational psychologists are well placed to train practitioners in these skills or even act as the facilitators for restorative meetings. Educational psychologists should also consider reiterating the importance of restorative practice remaining underpinned by its original principles in order to maintain its true purpose. I also think that when educational psychologists work in schools that apply restorative practices that they should highlight the importance of teaching emotional literacy and the underlying principles to the young people attending.

The findings also indicate that, although a large amount of the research is positive regarding restorative approaches, it is nonetheless essential to keep an open mind to behavioural interventions. Perhaps further small case studies or action research conducted by educational psychologists could contribute the understanding of the views of stakeholders.

5.8 Reflections

Throughout the research process I became more familiar with the challenges of conducting 'real world' research. 'Real world' research can be challenging to implement and some elements are outside the control of those conducting the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Gray (2013) argues that the difficulties that occur are because of the nature of research settings. Often organisations find it difficult, for many different reasons, to dedicate the time and resources needed to successfully implement a research study.

Not only was I able to reflect on how difficulties impacted the research projects at different times but was also able to apply what I learnt to my role as trainee educational psychologist. I have used my reflections on conducting research in an educational setting to become more sensitive to the many constraints that exist when working in schools and settings. I also used what I learnt about how to conduct and interpret interviews and have applied these to my consultations, in particular asking more open-ended questions and providing space and time for responses. I have also reflected on the importance of being able to build trust with young people I work with, and not expect them to be able to speak to a stranger about difficult feelings just because I might 'need' them to for an assessment process.

Furthermore, conducting my research has highlighted the importance of listening to young people about the interventions that are used with them. At face value, it may appear that young people are consenting to interventions or engaging with the processes. However, they may just be giving desirable answers, for example, offering apologies or responses that are not how they truly feel. This could result in them not learning from their experiences and then repeating their behaviours. I have used this knowledge when working with children and young people and consider it in my approach and formulations.

During this research, I encountered several obstacles. For instance, engaging with the setting and the staff who were to identify the participants was sometimes difficult. For the duration of the research the staff member responsible for liaising with myself changed and this delayed the start of collecting my data. I also encountered difficulties getting in to the setting during the summer term of 2018 as there had been sharp increase in the number of knife crimes in the area and the research was nearly cancelled. At this time, I had to negotiate with the head of the provision to allow me access to the site for one more day of interviews. This is probably a common issue when researchers rely on one single setting, with vulnerable participants, to conduct their research. Future research may benefit from having a longer time period to collect data as there would be more flexibility for rearranging data collection visits.

Once I was in the setting, I was then reliant on staff members to collect the young people identified for the interviews. This became quite problematic at times due to the nature of the provision. The doors lock on each corridor, and for safety reasons, the setting does not provide visitors with the pass to be able to freely move around the setting. On my first visit I was left in the small room I was assigned waiting for the young people to be brought to me. This sometimes felt

like I was a burden to the staff, and interrupted their work as I was often asking several staff members to see if they could find out if another young person was coming to participate. As a result of this I maintained regular contact with the deputy head to establish that I needed to conduct as many interviews as possible on my next visit. I also attended the morning staff briefing so that the deputy head could introduce me to the staff and inform them of my purpose for being in the setting. I also made sure I had a list of identified participants so that I could ask any member of staff to collect them for me. This made my last visit much more successful, as I conducted four interviews.

I also thought carefully about whether the young people were entering in to the research in a way that was truly voluntary. They were brought to me by staff members and I was introduced as an “Educational Psychologist” to them. I made sure that I described my role as a researcher to the young people, and made very clear that they could withdraw at any time. I think that perhaps it would have been advantageous to have spoken to the staff members and described that I was there in the capacity as a researcher, rather than in practice role. I also reflected that in research of this type, it may be useful for the researcher to be more involved in collecting the young person. This means that the way in which they are brought to the interview room can be the responsibility of the researcher. This would have meant that I could have set the tone that the whole process was voluntary.

As I outlined in the methodology chapter I also had to remain mindful that I have a dual role as a researcher and a practitioner. I maintained my role as a researcher with the participants by explaining to the participants that I was there as a researcher, and that I would have no influence on their placement there or that the interview was not part of any assessment. After completing my research

I have been able to combine the roles through presenting the findings back to the setting. This has been challenging as some of my findings have been difficult to present to the staff members and suggest that at the moment they are not a good example of best practice in restorative approaches. However, I have presented the findings at staff training meetings and have combined my role as a researcher, and also as a practitioner, offering consultation and feedback on how to take their practice forward. This was particularly challenging as my findings suggested that the setting had not been applying restorative practice in a way that was consistent with the underlying principles of restorative practice. The staff were open to reflecting on their practice and identified areas for development which was encouraging.

Despite these difficulties and some challenging reflections, I feel that overall the findings contribute to the evidence base regarding restorative practice. It highlights the importance for practitioners to keep in mind the principles underlying restorative approaches. I was able to identify implications for educational psychology practice and consider the future research necessary to contribute to this field. As a result of undertaking this research, I have developed an understanding of the research process and my appreciation for qualitative research has evolved.

5.9 Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of young people who had participated in restorative justice meetings. I was interested in their thoughts and opinions about the process, whether they thought it worked and what they might change about it. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews and analysed these with thematic analysis. Following this I identified

three key themes; knowledge of restorative meetings, restorative meetings broadly criticised and conflicting views on alternative behaviour interventions.

The themes revealed that the participants were quite critical of the way in which restorative approaches are applied in the research setting. The results offer a different angle, hence a unique contribution to the research base, as it is the first to explore young people's views in an alternative provision in the UK, with unusual findings. This means that although the findings cannot be generalised, they do offer some insight in to the differences to how restorative meetings may be perceived by young people in alternative provisions when compared to young people in mainstream settings. Further research is needed in this area to improve the evidence base for the use of restorative practices in educational alternative provisions and to inform its application in alternative provisions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Opt-out letter from the provision (anonymised)

Note: copied from original letter, in order to maintain confidentiality of setting and participants.

Dear Sophia,

This letter is to confirm that the Provision uses an opt-out approach to obtain consent for activities and research within the setting on a regular basis. There have been a number of research projects in the past that have had to use this approach to gain initial consent from parents and carers and then go on to gain fully informed consent from the young people they wish to work with.

It is my understanding that you wish to use this approach for your research on restorative practices and we, as a setting, are happy for you to use the opt-out letters to parents/carers.

Kind Regards,

Deputy Head (provision)

Appendix 2: Letter to parents with research project information and opt-out form

Restorative Justice Research Project.

Information Sheet.

My name is Sophia Bentley and I am doing my placement with the borough's Educational Psychology Department as part of my Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London. A requirement for my course is to carry out some research to develop the area of Educational Psychology.

The provision uses restorative approaches to manage conflict throughout the school day and involves the relevant young people and adults joining together to discuss the situation and any further consequences. The aim is to repair any harm caused and to minimise the chances of similar things happening again.

My research project involves conducting separate interviews with a number of young people who have recently been involved in a restorative meeting. Interviews will last no longer than 45 minutes. The questions I will ask will revolve around the young person's understanding of the process and what they feel about being involved in the meeting. The interview recordings and transcripts will be anonymised and stored securely in a password protected file.

I will also explain to the young person before the interview what my aims are and why I would like to talk to them, get a signature of consent and explain their right to withdraw from the research.

If you are happy for your child to take part in the research (if he has a restorative meeting between April 2018 – July 2018) then I will add his name to my 'available for interview' list. If you would rather they were not included, please return the opt out slip below to the setting.

If you would like any further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me on my email:

u1622752@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Dr Helena Bunn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: h.bunn@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

With many thanks,

Sophia Bentley

Parent/ Carers Name.....Date

Child or Young Person's Name.....

I would not like to include the above young person in the Restorative Justice research project.

Signed

Appendix 3: Information sheet for participants

Restorative Justice Research Project.

Information Sheet.

My name is Sophia Bentley and I am doing some research at the setting on restorative justice practices. I am interested in hearing your opinions on the restorative meeting that you have had in the last week. I would like to do a short interview with you where I will ask things about how much you understood the process and what the meeting felt like for you. I will record the interviews and then store them on a password protected and encrypted file without your name attached to it. Your details will be anonymised.

The aims of the research are to listen to yours and other young people about their experiences of restorative practice and to see how much of the process you understand. Information like this could help with how professionals use restorative practice in the future so it would be great to hear your thoughts on how it is used and why.

The interview will have no effect on any of the agreements you made in the meeting, and it will not affect your placement here at the setting. The interview is 100% confidential and I will not share any of your answers with the staff at the setting or with any other professionals. I will be the only person who hears the recordings, and these will not be available to anyone else.

The interview will take place in a private room where we cannot be overheard talking. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer then you do not have to. You can also decide to withdraw (not take part) at any point of the research as long as it is before I have analysed the data (October 2018).

Appendix 4: Participant consent form

Restorative Justice Research Project.

Participant Consent Form.

I have read the information sheet and spoken to Sophia about the research and I consent to taking part in the research project. I understand that this means taking part in a short interview with Sophia Bentley. I understand that my name will remain anonymous and that I can withdraw my data from the research until October 2018.

Signed

.....

Name

.....

Date

.....

Appendix 5: Interview guide

Intro

Confidential

Not part of school/placement or outcome

Can you tell me what you understand of restorative practice? Have you heard these words before?

IF NO....

I understand you have been involved in a restorative meeting? Is that what you call them or should I call it something else?

Can you remember it?

What can you tell me about restorative practice (or words they call it) in this school?

Is it anything else, just young people or with teachers? Is it used in classroom?

Why do you think they happen?

Who is normally involved?

What is the language used? Is it different for different situations? Victim/offender?

In your restorative meeting were you the one who had done something to someone else or did you have something done to you?

How did you feel that you had to have the meeting?

How did you react?

What can you remember about the meeting?

Were you asked any questions during the meeting?

Do you think it worked?

Anything else you can tell me about the meeting and how it went and how you reacted?

How did others involved react?

Was it similar to other meetings you had had?

How have you moved on? What was the plan at the end?

Were you involved in making the plan?

Do you like being involved/ would you have liked to have been involved?

Did it work? Why?

At your last school did they use this or was it detentions etc?

What do you prefer?

Why?

Is there anything we have missed?

Appendix 6: University Ethics Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Richard Ralley

SUPERVISOR: Helena Bunn

STUDENT: Sophia Bentley

Course: Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology

Title of proposed study: The experiences of restorative justice practices for those attending an alternative provision: A Thematic Analysis.

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Approved

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):

Reviewer Richard Ralley

Date: 28Mar18

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 7: Borough Ethical Approval

Note: details removed to maintain confidentiality of setting and participants

Dear Sophia,

Research Title: The experiences of restorative justice practices for those attending an alternative provision: a thematic analysis.

This is to confirm that your research proposal has been approved by the Research Governance Framework Panel.

Upon completion can you please submit a copy of your report or an extract from your conclusion to the above postal or email address. We may then publish details of your research on the National Social Care Research Register.

I would be grateful if you would complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback on the service that you have received. Please click on the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/rgfsurvey>

We want to ensure that we offer the best quality service to our users and your feedback is essential in improving our services further. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further assistance. I wish you well in your research study.

Yours sincerely,

Juanita Haynes

RGF Co-ordinator

Appendix 8: Extract from Adnan's Interview

S	So first of all, what do you, so have you heard of the word restorative meetings,
2	(Shakes head)
S	so, they don't use that sort of language? what do you call that meeting that you have when you come back after you've been sent home
2	you just call it a meeting innit
S	a meeting. and is that with, just one of your parents comes as well
2	yeah or my brother
S	ah ok so your brother yeah, so someone has to come from home or where you live?
2	yeah yeah
S	so really that's what we call a restorative meeting, so restorative means where we want to sort of mend any relationships that have had a bit of trouble because things have happened. so, what we'll call it a meeting for this? So, what can you tell me about why that meeting happened, so why do you think you have to...?
2	it's like when you misbehave innit they wanna talk to your parent and then make you say sorry and then get back to lesson
S	Ok so it's kind of (door knocks, interruption from staff) so ok so you said it's like a meeting that you have that you have to say sorry?
2	Yeah
S	so is that sort of what you think the purpose of it is, is that you go, you get sent home, you have to come back in and then you say sorry. and what does that mean after that then, because you've had this meeting it means you can.....
2	go back to lesson. it should all be behind us
S	and its sorted, and do they say that's it, its
2	Yeah
S	the lines been drawn
2	yeah
S	and we move on,
2	yeah
S	so, what can remember, why you had to have that meeting. what had happened before

2	one time I went out of the gates, and went out, and other times I've just been being stupid innit. shouting, swearing, throwing stuff around the classroom
S	ah ok, and then when you come back in erm, with someone from home you (Staff member comes in again) yeah so then you, so you have your meeting and you know you can go back in to class so some of the things you said are the reasons are that you've been a bit silly in the class or been swearing or one time, was that trying to leave the school
2	yeah yeah
S	so then is it explained to you why you've been sent home and you're gonna have this meeting
2	yeah, they tell you why you've been sent home
S	so, they call...
2	they call innit and they're like you have to bring (name) in tomorrow for the meeting yeah, he done this, yeah
S	ok so is it do you why you have to have the meeting, so for example you said if you know you've got to go and say sorry
2	Yeah
S	is it explained to you what the purpose is of it
2	yeah like why you did that
S	why did you do it
2	Yeah
S	and do you think you're given time to be able to explain why you behaved that way
2	Yeah
S	and everything, and what happens in terms of sort of, if something like that has happened you've got to go to the meeting do you feel like you've made a joint kind of plan, or do you think the teachers
2	the teachers
S	still the teachers, do you ever get to give your opinion on what should happen next or...
2	no
S	No, Hmmm
2	No
S	and what about erm, so when you make the plan erm, do you think it's something that's come up with together or is it always the adult's decision
2	it's always the adults
S	and what do you think would make it better, like do you think it works as a

2	No, cos a lot of people yeah, they like come in with that every day and still they doing it
S	so, there's lots of people they have it, someone comes in, have the meeting and then they still do it again
2	yeah still do it
S	why do think it might not be working?
2	maybe like cos it's happened too many times,
S	hmm hmm
2	or it's what they've got used to it
S	they're used to it. ah ok so do you think sometimes they're doing it cos they know. like for example maybe if you've said sorry even though you don't really mean it just cos you know you've got to to be able to go back in to class
2	yeah yeah
S	and what do you, is there anything that could make that more useful so that you've learnt from it or you, or actually being part of the decision
2	No
S	do you think you're given enough time to say what you think...?
2	No because you go in the meeting yeah and they tell my mum or my brother something like what I did the day before and they wouldn't let us explain innit they will just say get back in there, say sorry like innit. can't really do anything about being sent home innit. I not allowed, can't say like it wasn't me like, cos they won't believe it
S	so, you weren't allowed to say... right and then you just say sorry anyway
2	Yeah
S	so yeah you not learning really
2	when I used to do stuff, they would bring me, I literally just said sorry, so I can get back in
S	Yeah
2	but I didn't explain anything
S	so, you don't get the chance to explain, yeah, and what about in terms of the last school that you went to
2	Yeah
S	how did they sort of do it there, did you get detentions and exclusions and things?
2	Yeah yeah
S	and what do you prefer, do you prefer bit, that you get a kind of, get a detention or exclusion or do you prefer being able to have these meetings that mean you can come back to school straightaway

2	I'd rather do a detention, to be honest, it's like bringing my mum in for no reason innit, I don't want her to come so far
S	right, so you don't like that your mum has to come in for
2	yeah, she has to wake up really early, has to bring my little sister, she ain't got time for that
S	ok and if mum couldn't come, or someone from home couldn't come does that mean you can't go back to school until that
2	until you do it yeah
S	you have to wait until you have that meeting

Appendix 9: Pseudonyms assigned to participants

Interview Number	Pseudonym
1	Daiyan
2	Adnan
3	Rafi
4	Nazir
5	James
6	Stacey

Appendix 10: Examples of the coding process

	L do you think that having her in that meeting	
1	<p>it would, for me it would like depending how she felt towards me, if she felt like <i>depends on teacher - may make worse</i> <i>Reflexively</i></p> <p>oh that <u>she don't like me then she would try and like try her best to like make it</u></p> <p><u>the situation bad or worse for me</u>, if you know what I'm saying. but sometimes,</p> <p><u>more times they don't, they feel like they don't</u> <i>positive - feel like teachers don't try to make it worse</i></p>	
S	so, do you feel like it is a fair process	
1	<p>erm sometimes like, sometimes I think yeah but erm but yeah if you give me a <i>positive - sometimes fair</i></p> <p><u>choice I think it is fair</u> but then <u>there's times where like they wouldn't be fair,</u> <i>sometimes process is not fair</i></p> <p><u>and they would just do things like I wouldn't like, or I would be annoyed at</u></p>	
S	<p>yeah, ok and so thinking about the last school that you went to, do you prefer</p> <p>this restorative way of doing things or in your last school was it just, we call it</p> <p>zero tolerance where you just get a detention or exclusion and you don't get to</p> <p>share your views? was that kind of how it was?</p>	
1	<p>yeah that's yeah that's how it was as well, cos to be honest <u>I didn't really erm</u> <i>last school was detentions/exclusions</i></p> <p><u>have to come in much with my mum</u> like that. they only call me, what they did <i>difference between settings</i></p> <p>was, they would call me but that would be when, like <u>over a serious issue or</u></p> <p><u>something like very serious, something like that but normally they put you in</u></p> <p><u>unit or detention or whatever</u> <i>Differences between small/big things</i></p>	<i>Not have to come in w/ mum</i>
S	and what do you prefer	
1	<p><u>I prefer in the unit</u> <i>Prefer mainstream separate unit</i></p>	

6	Yeah, it's like <u>always the teacher who's been the problem</u> , or <u>you had kicked off with and then a senior</u> like, yeah head or whatever	Teacher attends and a senior
5	And do you have anyone from home there	
6	No	No one from home
5	Ok and can you tell me about what happens in that meeting then, like sort of, anything you can remember about who says what?	
6	So it's like <u>you say what you say happened</u> and whatever yeah so	knowledge of sequence - that YP speaks first.
5	Yeah And who speaks first or is it different	
6	<u>We always speak first</u> and, like <u>tell the situation</u> , whatever has happened from <u>that point of view</u> . But I don't think, like, I try not to get wound up again, cos like, I've already thought about it and I don't wanna go, you know... wound up.	Sequence - YP first give their view awareness of own feelings - not to get wound up.
5	Yeah so like you said it sort of, brings it all up again and you would..	Does not want to go to meeting but has to
6	Maybe some things could be, you know like, <u>settled there and then</u> and you know, <u>I'm not saying they are bad but sometimes it can be</u> , like	Settle the issue and not need to have meeting Not a negative view but sometimes could be settled?
5	Like, sort of feeling like it's been brought back up?	
6	Yeah, I see the point in it, <u>cos it's like it needs to be maybe talked about so you can learn from it</u> and, you know like <u>you might need to apologise</u>	knowledge of purpose → can learn from the meeting situation helps this
5	Yeah, can you tell me about what sort of happens then, you said that you say your side....?	
6	Yeah, so it's basically like <u>I say my bit</u> , then <u>maybe my keyworker might say something</u> about why I did it, and then it's like <u>the teacher says</u> , you know like, <u>why they think it happened</u>	Sequence of events in the meeting itself.
5	Mmmh yeah	

Appendix 11: Table of themes, codes and quotes

Theme	Subtheme		Quotes
Knowledge of Restorative Meetings	Process knowledge	Some needed scaffolding for meaning	<p>Interview 4, lines 2 – 3.</p> <p>“... so have you heard the term restorative practice?” No, not really” (after explanation) “I do remember, uhhhh actually...”</p> <p>Interview 2, lines 1-5</p> <p>“ So first of all, what do you, so have you heard of the word restorative meetings” (Shakes head) “so, they don't use that sort of language? what do you call that meeting that you have when you come back after you've been sent home?” “you just call it a meeting innit”</p> <p>Interview 1, lines 7-8</p> <p>“ yeah (indecipherable) I don't even know the name of it yeah, but I think there is one just if we get sent home we come in the next day and with our parent for a meeting”</p>
		Knowledge of who attends	Interview 5, lines 18 -19

			<p>“ like who was there?”</p> <p>“yeah so the headteacher, my mum, me and that's it”</p> <p>Interview 6, lines 19 -20</p> <p>“you know what my keyworker has always been with me because she knows how to calm me down”</p>
		sequence of meeting events	<p>Interview 4, line 54-55</p> <p>“ Students go first and the teachers, always so yeah, I say my opinion first and then the teacher talks and they say their opinion”</p> <p>Interview 6, line 31-32</p> <p>“We always speak first and, like tell the situation, whatever has happened from that point of view”</p>
		Sequence of events	<p>Interview 3, lines 13 -14</p> <p>“ so I was playfighting and then I got sent home for play fighting and then in the next day I had a meeting”</p> <p>Interview 2, line 44</p>

			<p>“ they call innit and they're like you have to bring (name) in tomorrow for the meeting”</p> <p>Interview 4, lines 10 – 11</p> <p>“ they have the meeting you know after they’ve sent you home”</p>
	Views of Purpose	Purpose is to understand what they have done	<p>Interview 3, lines 13-14</p> <p>“... then in the next day I had a meeting to discuss why I was play fighting”</p> <p>Interview 4, lines 13</p> <p>“ Because then when you have that meeting it’s an understanding of what you’ve done wrong”</p> <p>Interview 4, lines 40-41</p> <p>“... well basically the reason why you’ve been sent home, they talk about it, whether you’re in the wrong or not...”</p> <p>Interview 4, line 65</p> <p>“ Understanding that I’ve made a mistake ... that’s it the moral to it”</p>

			<p>Interview 4, lines 79-80</p> <p>“ More understanding, give you time to like, give you time to calm down and understand the situation and come in the next day and talk about it”</p>
		Purpose – to tell YP what they did	<p>Interview 1 lines 37-38</p> <p>“.... if you wanna know why you got sent home then obviously you have to come back the next day...”</p> <p>Interview 2, lines 42</p> <p>“yeah, they tell you why you've been sent home”</p>
		To go back to class or school	<p>Interview 1, lines 79-82</p> <p>“ to be honest for me the reason why I just turn up to the meeting is, so I can just come back to the school.... not that I really wanna sort it out with the teacher or whatever”</p> <p>Interview 2, lines 90</p>

			<p>“when I used to do stuff, they would bring me, I literally just said sorry, so I can get back in”</p> <p>Interview 5, line 31</p> <p>“It’s so you can come back to class and just put it behind you and that”</p> <p>Interview 5, lines 62-63</p> <p>“Yeah yeah, I dunno, it’s yeah you say sorry and you’re back to leaning in class which is the whole point”</p>
		To say sorry	<p>Interview 2, lines 15-16</p> <p>“ it's like when you misbehave innit they wanna talk to your parent and then make you say sorry and then get back to lesson”</p> <p>Interview 4, lines 63</p> <p>“I’m not asked why I’ve done it, but then if I have done it I’ve done it and I just apologise”</p> <p>Interview 5, line 36-37</p>

			<p>“ Erm, it’s so you can apologise and so can the teacher...”</p>
		To be able to move on	<p>Interview 1, lines 28-29</p> <p>“ if it is with a student obviously erm, they well it will be a different kind of meeting it will be for you to sort it out with that student”</p> <p>Interview 6, line 46-47</p> <p>“ Like when you apologise, you say sorry for what you done, like and then it is all settled and everyone moves on.”</p>

Theme 2

Theme	Subtheme		Quotes
Restorative Meetings Broadly Criticised	Role of the Parent/carers	Negative view of parent coming in Pointless travel	<p>“The thing is I had this meeting one time, and it was literally like a minute or two and my mum had to come, and that what annoyed me cos they could have said that over the phone, they don't need to bring my mum all the way in and do all of that, yeah, it's just long like” (Interview 1, lines 139 – 143)</p> <p>“...if it's something like a fight or assaulting a teacher then yeah, I would understand if you have to bring my parent in” (Interview 1, lines 153-155)</p> <p>“...or they can just have the meeting with you, rather than bring your parents in” (Interview 2, lines 110 – 111)</p> <p>“yeah yeah, like if you swear three times your mum has to come in, so it's stupid” (Interview 2, line 134)</p> <p>“cos for meetings your parent has to come in and that's all long for them.” (Interview 3, lines 126 -127)</p> <p>“What do you think he thinks about it?” “Urrrh I think that he actually finds it a little it annoying”</p>

			<p>“HMMMMM....”</p> <p>“Having to come back in and out for a meeting” (Interview 4, lines 84-87)</p> <p>“one thing I don’t like is how my parents have to come in for minor things” (Interview 4, lines 89-90)</p> <p>“.... yeah I think one thing that is annoying or whatever is that it is like my dad has to come in for the stupidest of things, yeah that’s it” (Interview 5, lines 68-69)</p> <p>“Why do you think it like annoys your dad?” “Cos its different from before innit, when he’d know after it was like I was getting kicked out for you know like when I was gonna be excluded” (Interview 5, lines 86-88)</p> <p>“yeah, you might still be feeling mad though, but I would just speak to my keyworker after” (Interview 6, lines 76-77)</p> <p>“but there’s no need in bringing the parents in when, even like with other students yeah like certain students live like further away and they get sent, like say it was a little issue your parent has to come all the way in for just that one little thing. that's just stupid. So pointless” (Interview 1, lines 146-148)</p>
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			<p>“I’d rather do a detention, to be honest, it's like bringin my mum in for no reason innit, I don't want her to come so far”</p> <p>“right, so you don't like that your mum has to come in for”</p> <p>“yeah, she has to wake up really early, has to bring my little sister, she ain't got time for that” (Interview 2, lines 101-104)</p> <p>“cos it's long for the parent and it's long for you as well, you know what I’m saying yeah” (Interview 3, line 45)</p>
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		Thought of parent coming in is what changes behaviour	<p>“the more you bring the parent in the more they understand to stop cos they wouldn't, to be honest I don't want my parent, my mum and that's why. I was getting sent home a lot but then it stopped recently, it stopped for a bit, and I didn't wanna have to bring my mum in” (Interview 1, lines 164-167)</p> <p>“yeah that's the only reason, the only reason why I really and truly come to school is. and I'll say it to any teacher is just for that. not for me now I am only doing it to keep my mum out of travelling and all them things” (Interview 1, lines 169 – 171)</p> <p>“...and what do you think makes you not do that behaviour again, is it the meeting or is it the thought of...?” “my mum coming in” (Interview 2, lines 135-137)</p>
	Disempowering Factors	Sharing own views makes process longer	<p>“like can't really argue if a teacher is saying they say, I would say, but trying to say this and that we can't really do that. we are still gonna get sent home and the next day like we come in and it's up to us if we wanna argue back and make the meeting longer just deal with it, get it over and done” “so, if you gave your true opinion....”</p>

			<p>“it's just gonna get longer and they are gonna keep saying this and that happened then just keeps going on and on then its long”</p> <p>“yeah, so do you sometimes just sort of in a way just do it to just...”</p> <p>“Give up”</p> <p>(Interview 1, lines 191 – 198)</p> <p>“it'll just make it worse like, they'll send you home again and again and again”</p> <p>(Interview 2, line 185)</p> <p>“Yeah, so like in the meeting it's like basically, it's you have to say sorry. If it's like not then you can't go back to class or you have to get sent home, and like, it would just make it all start again”</p> <p>(Interview 6, 56-58)</p>
		Sense of 'giving up' even if perceive they are right	<p>“at that point I just I just couldn't be arsed...”</p> <p>(Interview 1, line 72)</p> <p>“I just say sorry, so I can go back innit, I'm not gonna put up a fight or anything. I just wanna get it over and done with, so I just listen, I still feel like why did you lie and that but I'll just leave it. it's not gonna change if you say anything.”</p>

			<p>(Interview 2, lines 181-183)</p> <p>“But, with a teacher I just apologise like, cos it is easier”</p> <p>(Interview 6, line 50-51)</p>
		More anger if sent home unjustly	
		Like prison sentence – see meeting as punishment	<p>“.....but I’ve done the little, I’ve done the least. it’s like going to prison. yeah, whoever done the least gets the least sentence, they don't all get the same”</p> <p>(Interview 3, lines 74-76)</p>
		RM in morning starts day off on a negative Meetings bring back negative feelings to surface	<p>“yeah, I understand but it's very frustrating innit, I’m not going to lie to you. it's very frustrating like, it will make me angry throughout the whole day.”</p> <p>(interview 3, lines 30-31)</p> <p>“...cos it frustrates me and I feel angry innit, I’ve already had a meeting today, I feel moody throughout the whole day”</p> <p>(Interview 3, lines 35-36)</p> <p>“....personally i think they make it worse like me i find talking about a problem once i've got over it myself only makes it worse for me”</p> <p>(Interview 6, lines 6-7)</p>
		Success depends on adult in meeting	<p>“for me it would like depending how she felt towards me, if she felt like oh that she don't like me then she would try and like try her best to like make it the situation bad or worse for me”</p>

			(Interview 1, lines 115 – 116)
		YP has to apologise regardless/ blame	<p>“there was never like, even if I was to be the victim and erm, but somehow the teacher would end up like getting me sent home and then I would just have to come in and again in the morning and then sort it out, even if I still think I didn't really do nothing wrong like I’m the victim and that...” (Interview 1, lines 183-185)</p> <p>“...and you just have to say sorry or it doesn’t get done, it is like the adult is right anyway” (Interview 5, lines 39-40)</p> <p>“...and it’s like, I just say sorry to stop it” (Interview 6, line 54)</p> <p>“Yeah like with a teacher or adult or whatever, it’s like you’re the kid so you have to say like sorry or you won’t get back to class, but you know, I dunno” (Interview 6, lines 65-66)</p> <p>“...that if you think, like if it is the teacher and still you have to be, you know the one to apologise, and if you don’t then it isn’t over. Like, I yeah, you might still be feeling mad though, but I would just speak to my keyworker after.” (Interview 6. Lines 74-77)</p>

			<p>“...I dunno, it’s sort of like just so you can go and leave the meeting. It don’t mean that you are actually sorry” (Interview 5, lines 36-37)</p>
		YP not part of the decision making in meting – next steps	<p>“are you involved in that decision or do you feel like it's still the adults” “well, to be honest we can't really say anything then, it already been made a decision...” (Interview 1, line 99)</p> <p>“do you feel like you've made a joint kind of plan, or do you think the teachers” “the teachers” “still the teachers, do you ever get to give your opinion on what should happen next or...” “no” “No, Hmmmm” “No” (Interview 2, lines 56-62)</p>
		Teachers have the power in the meetings	<p>“it is just in general, teachers generally have more power the the students “ (Interview 1, line 189)</p> <p>“nah, it’s mostly, the student never gets listened to...the teachers power is stronger than the students” (Interview 3, lines 104-105)</p>

		Cannot say view	<p>“they wouldn't let us explain innit they will just say get back in there, say sorry like innit. can't really do anything about being sent home innit. I not allowed, can't say like it wasn't me like, cos they won't believe it”</p> <p>(Interview 2, lines 84-86)</p> <p>“but I didn't explain anything”</p> <p>(Interview 2, Line 92)</p> <p>“no cos if you try and say our side they will be like you're interrupting me, and if you still try and say your side they will send you home again”</p> <p>(Interview 2, lines 153 -154)</p>
	Fairness	Lack of trust in adults at meetings	<p>“they might start trusting someone else. ive had a meeting yeah and then they would say what's actually happened and they would exaggerate like, they would put more stuff in it”</p> <p>(Interview 2, lines 150-151)</p> <p>“so, if you swear yeah, you swear three times and then, sometimes they will make it sound like something else and then they'll go to another teacher and be like did you hear that, did you hear that. and then they'll get that teacher in the meeting but like,</p>

			<p>they go to a teacher that they're close with and like they bring that other teacher to the meeting” (interview 2, lines 156-159)</p> <p>“cos like some teachers that don’t like you will exaggerate, or they will change your words or something like that” (Interview 2, lines 166-167)</p> <p>“sometimes the teacher that was there, they don't bring that teacher in, they bring another teacher, that teacher says your lying, but she wasn't actually there, she just listened to the other one” (Interview 2, lines 177-179)</p> <p>“know what one thing I hate the most the teachers, every meeting you get teachers will twist words up and that , so for example I was play fighting yeah and they were saying, yeah they were fighting they were fully punching on each other, alright we were punching but they will exaggerate on something” (Interview 3, lines 48-52)</p>
		Fairness – adults swear too	<p>“I don't know if you swear or not, its common, I’ve seen teachers do it for goodness sake. like can't the students give the teachers a warning. haha and get them sent home if they swore three times” (Interview 3, lines 128-130)</p>

		Teachers get listened to over YP Teacher wins	<p>“...like teacher will win at the end of the day, can't really argue with that” (Interview 1, lines 99-100)</p> <p>“....I can't really say cos I would never like beat the teacher they would always like, end up winning so there's no point trying...” (Interview 1, lines 186-187)</p> <p>yeah so it is still them who are believed over the yeah, so it always comes down to the adult side being taken and it is, so innit, it's I can say whatever and it is still the adult....yeah” “Ok so you think that even like these meetings don't feel like...” “Like they don't feel fair like it isn't that different” (Interview 5, Lines 42-46)</p> <p>“....But maybe it could be like more even...” (Interview 6, line 69)</p>
	When the RM happen	Difference between big/small things or incidents	<p>“nah, I think it's unnecessary every single time. it's only the major ones I think there should be meetings but the minor ones a little chat should be alright, little thing” (Interview 3, lines 41-42)</p> <p>“but the littlest things make, you get a meeting innit and that's very frustrating.”</p>

		<p>(Interview 3, lines 81-82)</p> <p>“And what do you think could be done differently with those minor things?”</p> <p>“It could just be dealt with me and the teacher”</p> <p>(Interview 4, lines 91-93)</p> <p>“I get it, you know, that he needs to know but maybe just be on the phone and then come in for more serious.”</p> <p>(Interview 5, lines 84-85)</p> <p>“yeah, majority of the time they are small things we get sent home, more times its over small things”</p> <p>(Interview 1, line 150)</p> <p>“yeah like say if it was a small issue just send them home or keep them in or if it gets too much then send them home and then let them come back next day fresh start”</p> <p>(Interview 1, lines 160-161)</p>
	Change – phone calls for smaller things	<p>“nah so I think what should be done is if it’s a minor issue then I think a simple little phone call home or something, but not a meeting”</p> <p>(Interview 3, lines 55-56)</p>

			<p>“yeah like swearing, I don't think you should have a meeting cos swearing and honestly I think like a little phone call home it will sort... not even a phone call home, it's swearing like, get three warnings yeah just have a little exclusion or something innit or detention” (Interview 3, lines 87-89)</p>
		Meetings happen too often	<p>“maybe like cos it's happened too many times,” “hmm hmm” “or it's what they've got used to it” (Interview 2, lines 72-74)</p> <p>“I think one thing that is annoying or whatever is that it is like my dad has to come in for the stupidest of things, yeah that's it” (Interview 5, lines 68-69)</p>
		<p>Being sent home for everything – no difference in sanctions</p> <p>Meetings for all incidents – No scale</p>	<p>“yeah but the thing is if you swear three times you get sent home but then you also get sent home if you actually told the teacher to EFF off” (Interview 3, 95-96)</p> <p>“So basically, I think that personally you can be sent home for small things, you know, so like you can get sent home for like swearing or being aggressive with an adult but then, yeah, being stupid with water, it's like I dunno I don't make no sense”</p>

			(Interview 5, lines 73-75)
		Meetings happen whether in right or wrong Sense of social justice, sent home for least role in incident	<p>“sometimes even if I’m in the wrong like if I’m not in the wrong I still have a meeting. so, there's a couple times I’ve play fought, the second time I was play fighting erm I wasn't really involved, I’ve stepped in and then I went back out and the other two were still fighting I got sent home, and the other dude did get sent, but I’ve done the little, I’ve done the least” (Interview 3 , lines 71-75)</p> <p>“I think that is worse cos like you've got sent home, if you had a little argument yeah and you get sent home, like imagine it's not your fault, so imagine you start arguing with me and I argue back and we both get sent home. I’ve defended myself by arguing back, they, I get sent home.” (Interview 3, lines 152-155)</p>
		Settle conflicts out of school	<p>“that’s gonna make me more angry so, then as soon as we both get sent out of school there's a fight happening, and there's no teachers, I think that’s pointless, it’s stupid”</p> <p>“so that’s what happens, that sometimes things are settled out of school but then you come in and you do the meeting”</p> <p>“yeah, but it's all over but you just sit there with bruises all over your face” (Interview 3, lines 155-159)</p>

		Times it should happen	<p>“yeah there are some things that happen where they do have to come in like if it was say a fight happened” (Interview 2, lines 123-124)</p> <p>“or if it keeps happening and you don’t learn” (Interview 2, line 128)</p> <p>“but when it’s a major like for example a real fight or something then that's when a meeting or something should happen” (Interview 3, lines 56-57)</p> <p>“I think it’s alright for play fighting, cos its fighting innit, it's physical” (Interview 3, line 143)</p> <p>“Yeah, I see the point in it, cos it’s like it needs to be maybe talked about so you can learn from it and, you know like you might need to apologise” (Interview 6, lines 38-39)</p>
	Some Positive Views	<p>Sense of closure</p> <p>Presence of parent makes a difference to behaviour</p> <p>Thought of the meeting is the deterrent</p>	<p>“they will try and help me in a way” (Interview 1, line 85-86)</p>

			<p>“yeah it does kinda help a bit cos once you like, cos there's no point holding a grudge if you just sorted it there and then.” (Interview 1, lines 91-92)</p> <p>“but sometimes, more times they don’t, they feel like they don’t” (Interview 1, line 117)</p> <p>“so, do you feel like it is a fair process” “erm sometimes like, sometimes I think yeah but erm but yeah if you give me a choice I think it is fair” (Interview 1, Lines 118-119)</p> <p>“the system the way like, it works and that” (Interview 1, line 143)</p> <p>“actually I think that it’s actually a good idea that they have the meeting you know after they’ve sent you home” (Interview 4, lines 10-11)</p> <p>“Because then when you have that meeting it’s an understanding of what you’ve done wrong” (Interview 4, line 13)</p> <p>“do you think the adults listen to you?” “Yeah they do actually listen” (Interview 4, lines 50-51)</p>
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			<p>“So when you go back to the teachers classroom do you feel like that line has been drawn” “Yeah of course, because we’ve both apologised to each innit” (Interview 4, lines 68-69)</p> <p>“Do you think that having a parent there for things that are more serious that’s a good thing?” “Yeah of course of course. A lot. It just seems the way it should be” (Interview 4, lines 95-97)</p> <p>“yeah like overall definitely cos they make you understand it and that sort of thing, I like them in that sort of thing” (Interview 6, lines 79-80)</p>

Theme 3

Theme	Subtheme		Quotes
Conflicting views on alternative behaviour interventions	Negative views on previous setting	Just got 'kicked out' at previous school Getting sent home with no explanation Not given chance to explain Being sat at home excluded	<p>"Yeah at that it was just detentions and getting kicked out and without anything" (Interview 5, line 52)</p> <p>"now it takes longer and you get sent home everytime innit but it means you don't just get kicked" (Interview 5, lines 55-56)</p> <p>"as much as I think it is a bit annoying and that it is I dunno, I used to get mad getting sent home without being told why and just not being in school doesn't make sense, I dunno, but yeah like just being sat at home is stupid" (Interview 5, Lines 58-60)</p> <p>"like it was so like, boom here detention and then I got so mad cos I was like never got to say like what it was you know" (Interview 6, lines 83-84)</p>
	Positive views on previous setting	Sense of closure from detentions – can move on Positive view of mainstream unit RM negative in comparison to exclusion	<p>"cos to be honest I didn't really erm have to come in much with my mum like that." (Interview 1, line 125-126)</p> <p>"I prefer in the unit" (Interview 1, line 130)</p>

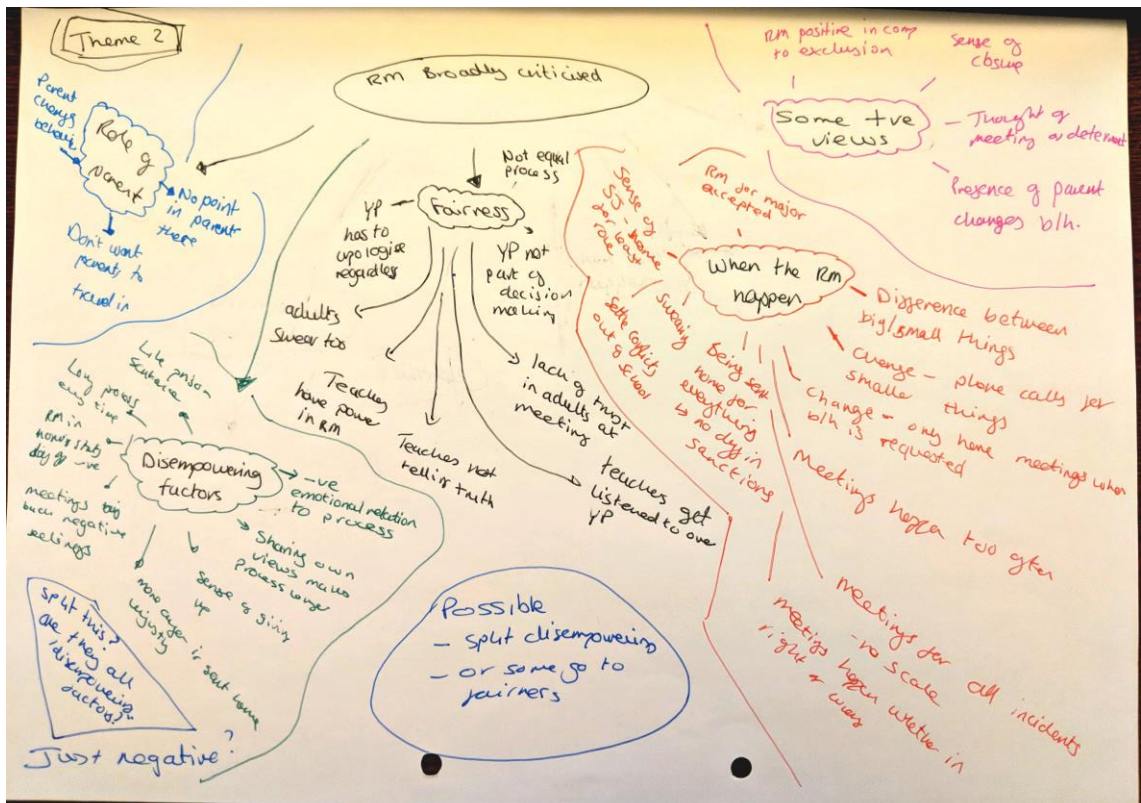
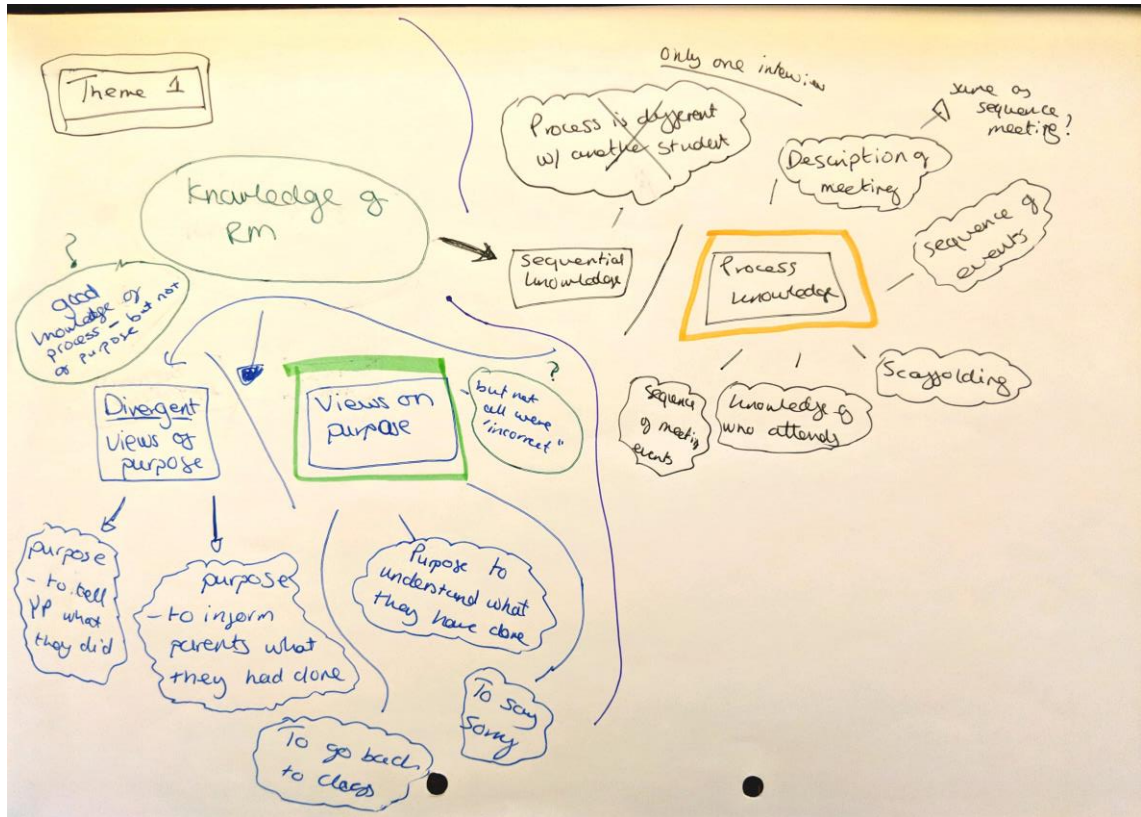
			<p>“there was a little unit and I was in there for about 6 weeks and then I came out, well 8, and then I was back in lessons and then they just put me back in there and from there I just stayed in there and did whatever I wanted to” (Interview 1, lines 132-134)</p> <p>“, you think you'd prefer that clearer, you've got a detention for this” “yeah yeah” “you done your detention and then” “you're done yeah” (Interview 2, lines 190-193)</p> <p>“I think detentions are better, cos for meetings your parent has to come in and that's all long for them” (Interview 3, lines 126-127)</p> <p>“Well, I dunno cos atleast in the last school, I could like just deal with it in my own way, and like get over it” (Interview 6, lines 86-87)</p>
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Appendix 12: Initial Codes/Themes

1. Description of meeting
2. Needing scaffolding for meaning
3. Knowledge of who attends
4. Some emotional relation to process
5. Sense of closure
6. Negative opinions of process
7. Positive in comparison to exclusion
8. Negative in comparison to exclusion
9. When meetings are carried out – difference between big/small things
10. Adults believed over young person
11. Purpose is to understand what they have done
12. Meetings bring back negative feelings
13. Unequal process
14. Sequence of events
15. Sequence of meeting
16. Have to apologise regardless
17. Sharing views makes process longer
18. Change – phone call for smaller things
19. Different process if another student
20. Positive view of mainstream unit
21. Sense of 'giving up' even if perceive they are right
22. Success depending on adult in meeting
23. Purpose – to inform parent what you did
24. Purpose – to tell you what you did
25. Meetings happen too often
26. Young person not part of the decision making in meeting – next steps
27. No point in parent being there – what is the purpose
28. Change – only have meetings when behaviour is repeated
29. What adults are in meeting – sense of trust
30. Closure from detention – previous school – can move on
31. Teachers not telling truth – need ally in meeting

32. Parent having to travel in for small things
33. Parent coming in changing behaviour
34. Thought of meeting is deterrent
35. Starts day on a negative
36. Meetings for major things accepted
37. Long process for meetings to happen everytime – YP and parent
38. Teachers not telling the truth
39. Sent home for swearing – pointless
40. Meetings happen whether in wrong or right
41. Sense of social justice, sent home for least role in incident
42. Meetings for all, no scale
43. Like prison – see meetings as punishment
44. Focus on swearing being small issue
45. Being sent home for everything – no difference in sanction
46. Teachers have the power in the meetings
47. Teachers get listened to
48. Teachers swear – fairness
49. Anger if sent home unjustly
50. Settle conflicts out of school

Appendix 13: Building the themes



Theme 3

Conflicting views on
Alternative B/h
interventions

Negative views on
previous setting

positive views on
previous setting

RM negative
in comparison
to exclusion

sense of closure
from detentions
- can move on

Positive view
of mainstream
unit